The Propaganda of Power

The Role of Panegyric in Late Antiquity

Edited by
Mary Whitby

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THE PROPAGANDA OF POWER

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THE ROLE OF PANEGYRIC IN LATE ANTIQUITY

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

MARY WHITBY

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PREFACE

Each chapter in this volume is self-contained, with an independent bibliography constructed by individual authors. A very few works which are repeatedly cited are referred to by author's name alone and listed at the beginning (after the Abbreviations). All Latin and Greek is translated in the hope that the volume may be of interest and value to those unfamiliar with the ancient languages.

Although St Andrews has left little mark on the final product, this volume was conceived in that northerly bastion of classical learning where a particularly lively group of late-antique enthusiasts, now sadly dispersed, provoked the idea that exciting new things were being said about panegyric. Several of the chapters were first presented as papers at the Classical Association Annual General Meeting in St Andrews in 1995; revised versions of these have been complemented by new pieces from young and established scholars with interests in the same field. The scheme to bring this material together was encouraged by Julian Deahl of Brill, whose initiative has been sympathetically supported in its later stages by Job Lisman.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge the most prominent of my many debts in compiling the volume. The work was done while I enjoyed the privilege of a Leverhulme Special Research Fellowship at Royal Holloway, University of London, where first-rate colleagues and a friendly environment offered a twofold stimulus. Royal Holloway also provided practical assistance in the form of a generous grant towards the cost of compiling the index, the latter a daunting task willingly undertaken by Dr Alicia Correa. I am especially grateful to those who stepped in with practical offers of help in the final stages—Claudia Rapp and Michael Whitby; and to Tamar Nelson and Mark Vermes for proof-reading. I have enjoyed the best possible support and assistance and the additional pleasure of working with friends, but of course I alone remain responsible for errors and deficiencies.

Oxford
October 1997

ABBREVIATIONS

AJP	*American Journal of Philology*
ANRW	*Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*
BHG	Bibliotheca Hagiographicae Graecae
BICS	*Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*
BMGS	*Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies*
BZ	*Byzantinische Zeitschrift*
CC	Corpus Christianorum
CIL	*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum (Berlin 1863–)*
Cl. Ant.	*Classical Antiquity*
CP	*Classical Philology*
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
DOP	*Dumbarton Oaks Papers*
G&R	*Greece and Rome*
GRBS	*Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies*
HSCP	*Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*
JHS	*Journal of Hellenic Studies*
JRS	*Journal of Roman Studies*
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
LSJ	H.G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek–English Lexicon*, 9th ed. by H.S. Jones and R. McKenzie, with a revised supplement (Oxford, 1996)
MGH	Monumenta Germaniae Historica AA = Auctores antiquissimi SRM = Scriptores rerum Merouingicarum
OCT	Oxford Classical Text
OLD	*Oxford Latin Dictionary*, ed. P.G.W. Glare (Oxford, 1982)
PBA	*Proceedings of the British Academy*
PG	*Patrologia Graeca*
PL	*Patrologia Latina*
PLRE	*A Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire*, 3 vols., ed. A.H.M. Jones, J.R. Martindale, J. Morris (Cambridge, 1971–92)
RE	*Real-Encyklopaedie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft*, ed. A. Pauly, G. Wissowa, W. Kroll and others (Stuttgart, 1893–1974)

TAPA	*Transactions of the American Philological Association*
Vig. Christ.	*Vigiliae Christianae*
WS	*Wiener Studien*
YCS	*Yale Classical Studies*

WORKS CITED BY AUTHOR'S NAME ALONE

Jones	A.H.M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire 284–602* (Oxford, 1964).
MacCormack	S.G. MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1981).
Nixon and Rodgers	C.E.V. Nixon and B.S. Rodgers, *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors: The Panegyrici Latini* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1994). (Traditional roman numerals and the numbering of Mynors' Oxford Classical Text are used to denote the *Panegyrici Latini.*)
Russell and Wilson	D.A. Russell and N.G. Wilson, *Menander Rhetor* (Oxford, 1981). (References to Menander Rhetor are cited by page and line of Spengel's text, *Rhetores Graeci* III (1856, repr. 1966) 331–46.)

INTRODUCTION

This volume gathers together a range of new studies in English dealing with the public presentation of leaders over six centuries from the first to the early seventh century AD. Coverage is inevitably selective, dictated by the chance survival of ancient material and the current interests of contributors. Although it cannot be comprehensive, it is hoped that the volume is representative. It looks at both theory and practice, both prose and poetry, Latin and Greek—in this collection similarities between the two are often more striking than differences—, at independent pieces and panegyric embedded within works of a different overall character, individual works and sequences from a single hand or linked by related themes; it ranges over power-bases of the entire late-antique world, from Gaul—whose turbulent history over the period is brought into focus in a number of chapters—and the western capitals of the pre-Constantinian emperors to the heartlands of Rome and Constantinople, and further east to Antioch. Its objective is to provoke discussion and reaction, to raise again issues which continue to fascinate and to puzzle, and to which there can be no comprehensive or conclusive answer. What is the relation between textbook theory and actual practice? How sensitive were contemporary audiences to the literary conventions, allusions and commonplaces so meticulously identified by modern commentators? How can panegyric be reconciled with issues of truth and the 'facts' of history? What is the role of the panegyrist, that of mediator, adviser, propagandist or (most likely) some variable intermediate admixture? How can we determine his relationship to the often-competing demands of audience and honorand? To what extent might he have a personal agenda? Are humour and irony elements of his artistic repertoire? What can be said of the circumstances of performance and/or 'publication' of surviving works, and how does this affect our interpretation of them? Every contributor to the volume confronts at least some of these themes and the variety of their responses should enliven future debate. All without exception stress the importance of locating panegyrics within their immediate historical setting.

The collection addresses a diversity of issues, but above all it illustrates the remarkable resilience, versatility and innovative capacity of a genre whose essential outline was encapsulated in the time of Diocletian by the anonymous rhetorician whose treatise has come down to us under the name of Menander Rhetor. Far from blighting imperial panegyric with its schematic layout and stereotyped examples, Menander's treatise serves as a baseline by which to measure the vitality of a genre which proved as enduring as epic and equally flexible in adapting to the demands of a changing world. The chance survival of this convenient handbook has doubtless produced an exaggerated estimate of its importance: as Donald Russell points out, familiarity with established practice rather than reference to a standard scheme will have been the chief inspiration for the more literate proponents of this politically-sensitive genre. Russell makes the important point too that in Menander's day the great imperial celebrations for which most extant panegyrics were produced were scarcely established: the tradition of rhetorical theory is chiefly concerned with private or academic, rather than public, occasions. But schoolboy training will have produced widespread audience awareness of the ground rules and hence a fine sensitivity to platitudes, as well as to nuances of variation or omission in each new example of the genre.

Stressing the very limited proportion of panegyrics to have survived, Russell assesses the relationship between theory and practice in a survey of the field which ranges over prose texts from Plato to Choricius of Gaza in the early sixth century AD. The background is set with identification of familiar features of the genre and discussion of the range of terminology applied to this third branch of oratory, distinct from the forensic and deliberative types. The Greek and Roman theoretical tradition, to which 'Menander' was but one contributor, is illuminated by citation of surviving examples. Evidence for the teaching of encomium is limited—epideictic was not a part of the classical rhetorical curriculum,—as is our knowledge of contemporary standards and the practicalities of performance, but linguistic purity, careful preparation, and appropriate modulation and variety of style and rhythm were essential. The importance of these characteristics is demonstrated from sample surviving works, among which a speech of Themistius and *Pan. Lat.* VIII are selected for detailed attention.

General rhetorical technique is as important as theory for understanding the panegyrists: apart from chance papyrus finds which alert us to the limits of the less able, only examples by the best practitioners have survived.

Menander Rhetor, of course, does no more than set out the scheme of a genre whose roots go back to the earliest surviving literature. The Homeric epics include passages which celebrate present and past leaders, but the epinician odes of Pindar mark the emergence of self-contained literary praise of an individual as part of an elaborate complex of aural and visual ceremonial to elevate and commemorate high achievement. Imperial verse panegyrics do not retain the intricate metres, music and choreography of archaic choral lyric, but the Pindaric odes provide a precedent for the elaboration of a multi-faceted ceremonial setting for praise, as well as for the range of topics covered. Moreover, analysis of the standard topics of Pindar's epinician odes has proved an important key to their interpretation, as Menander's handbook provides a yardstick for the evaluation of imperial works of praise.

Prose panegyric emerges with other rhetorical prose genres at the end of the fifth century BC, first manifest for us in the funeral speeches in commemoration of the collective dead of which Pericles' is best known (Thucydides 2.34–46). But Russell notes that the topics are sufficiently securely established for Plato to put into the mouth of Agathon in the *Symposium* a pastiche encomium of Love. Isocrates provides a full-blown celebration of an individual in his speech of praise for King Evagoras of Salamis in Cyprus. Braund draws attention to the importance of this work in two significant respects: it elevates a single monarchic individual in a manner alien to the Greek democratic tradition, and the speech was composed for a ceremonial occasion, the honouring of Evagoras' tomb, although ceremonial for the living is the characteristic setting for imperial panegyrics. These are typically associated with the emperor's accession, *adventus* (arrival in a city), assumption of the consulship, anniversaries, building work, and so on, or express thanks (*gratiarum actio*), perhaps for the bestowal of an honour on the speaker, as in the case of Pliny's panegyric of Trajan, our archetypal Latin text for the genre. Panegyric assists the glorification of great occasions, and its evocation of the familiar can also create an atmosphere of security and strength in troubled and uncertain times.

Pliny and his model emperor Trajan mark the real starting-point of the volume, and a focal point for Braund and Rees. Pliny's is the earliest surviving independent panegyric composed for a specific occasion, the author's formal expression of thanks for Trajan's bestowal of the suffect consulship in AD 100. Measurement of his assessment of Trajan against Menander's schema highlights the skilful manipulation of potentially damaging topics such as Trajan's origins, the first instance of a technique repeatedly highlighted in later chapters: suppression and selection from the standard pool are fundamental to successful panegyric. Pliny's conspicuous stress on Trajan's *ciuilitas* and *humanitas*, or identification with his people, is singled out by Braund. This same feature provides Rees with an important perspective for the assessment of public images of later Dyarchic and Tetrarchic emperors. Among other key panegyrical features identified by Braund in Pliny are favourable comparison with predecessors—Domitian provides excellent material in this case and Braund notes the complementary nature of satire and panegyric—, presentation of the emperor as father to his people and analogy between the emperor and divinity. Central to her argument is the importance of immediate context in determining the content and nature of a work of panegyric. Pliny's work dates from the beginning of Trajan's reign: he is not in a position to comment upon the emperor's achievements, but rather reflects or even prescribes an optimistic programme for the new reign. Such a protreptic element is natural in works associated with accession. From this basis Braund looks backwards to uncover panegyrical elements in Cicero's three Caesarian speeches *For Marcellus*, *For Ligarius* and *For King Deiotarus*, each of which deals with the new phenomenon of power invested in a single individual. Indeed the traditions of Roman imperial panegyric can be traced yet further back to Cicero's speech *On Pompey*, while the surviving parts of Seneca's Neronian treatise *On Clemency*, also associated with the beginning of the reign, display panegyrical features incorporated into a text cast as a philosophical and didactic treatise. This points the way to later chapters in the volume which also deal with panegyrics embedded in works not themselves overtly panegyrical: Humphries, Rapp, Urbainczyk and Michael Whitby all deal with Christian prose texts of a variety of types.

Rees moves forward in time from Pliny to analyse a cluster of ideas connected with the private life of emperors over the two

hundred years from Trajan to Theodosius I. These illuminate the changing nature of imperial power in this period of transition. Pliny's identification of Trajan as a citizen *princeps* on the model of Augustus does not reappear until the time of Julian (AD 361–3) and Theodosius I (AD 379–95). In the Dyarchic and Tetrarchic period and even for Constantine the virtues of private life are subordinated: the emperor becomes a remote and superior figure whose good qualities are highlighted by contrast with the vices of usurping rivals, while softer affections are reserved for colleagues in power rather than family. The panegyrist's adjustment of the balance between personal and public virtues enables the presentation of different styles of government: one factor, but not the only one, in determining this balance is the stability of power. Concern with immediate issues will naturally govern the panegyrist's selection of imperial virtues, but these may be local or personal, as in Eumenius' plea for the restoration of the schools (*Pan. Lat.* IX) or Symmachus' emphasis on the value of letters (*Orr.* 1–2). An extension of this feature is the appropriation of the panegyrical rostrum for personal promotion or glorification, a tactic irresistible to a confident man of letters like Ausonius (21 Green).

Tougher is the first of several contributors to focus on the fourth century and on the problems of a single work, in this case Julian's panegyric for Eusebia, wife of Constantius II. Several features make this text a rewarding study: no work associated with Julian is likely to be uncontroversial, while the focus on the emperor's consort gives this speech an unusual, if not unique, character in extant panegyric, signalled by Julian's citation of Athene's praise of Queen Arete in the seventh book of the *Odyssey* as his model. The Homeric model also, of course, signals Julian's own preoccupation with literature, and alludes elegantly to the stated occasion of the work, a *gratiarum actio* for a gift of books from the empress. Issues of context, tone and performance are paramount here. What exactly are we to make of Julian's difficult relationship with his cousin at the time of his service in Gaul in the late 350s? For what audience was Julian writing and how was the speech delivered? Was it intended for Julian's coterie in Gaul, for Constantius' supporters there, or was it simply sent to Constantius and Eusebia? Does the traditional interpretation of the work as a textbook example moulded to Menander's guidelines hold water? Despite the abundance of material relating to Julian this is a case where

answers must be speculative and the atmosphere one of possible hidden agendas. One issue is, however, clear: like Eumenius and Ausonius in the speeches discussed by Rees, the panegyrist is himself a prominent man of letters, and one with his own personal programme to promote. This speech is a more personal diplomatic tool than any of those yet considered, but the way in which it should be interpreted remains elusive because of our inability to recover the precise circumstances which gave rise to it.

Like Julian, Themistius was a figure of considerable personal standing, the more so as his career advanced. Peter Heather submits the philosopher–panegyrist's forty-year prominence to hard-headed analysis, arguing against traditional extremes which represent him either as a blatant flatterer or as a more altruistic figure who served a sequence of emperors for worthwhile personal convictions. Stressing Themistius' dual expertise in both rhetoric and philosophy, Heather notes the political value of the philosopher's unworldly image and his association with truth. But no one who survived so long at the epicentre of eastern politics can have been an entirely ingenuous operator: Themistius' philosophical stance identified him as the representative of Hellenic traditions of culture to an élite which clung to its pagan past under a series of Christian emperors: the key to his durability lay in this image of continuity and stability. In Themistius the ideals of Platonic–Aristotelian virtue offer a convincing alternative to the *basilikos logos* as a basis for imperial praise, and one which proved as versatile for the depiction of successive emperors as individual epitomes of the ideal ruler. Dead honorands fared less well, however, in the reigns of their successors. But Themistius was no mealy-mouthed mumbler: his power-base was the Constantinopolitan Senate which he had been personally instrumental in expanding. Contemporary correspondence reveals him at the centre of a social network, at once patronage-broker with the emperor and a skilled intermediary with the authority to package imperial policies before the Senate. Seldom is Themistius doing exactly what he purports to be—even in his ostentatious truth-claims—but scrutiny of the whole corpus of his rhetorical works shows up convincing patterns which form the basis for a new, tougher, interpretation of his tactics and objectives. Of the writers discussed in this volume, only Venantius Fortunatus served a comparable range of masters, but in his case the stakes were not always so high as for the long-

enduring publicist of a sequence of eastern emperors in a period of political change and barbarian threats.

Political instability forms the background to Claudian's first speech *Against Rufinus*, discussed by Paula James, but in other respects this chapter marks a new departure. This is the first overt invective to be considered, although the panegyrical technique of contrasting the virtues of the present emperor with the vices of his predecessors demonstrates that panegyric and invective are two sides of the same coin: so Claudian vilifies Rufinus in order to glorify his patron Stilicho. This is also the first treatment of a poetic text, equipped with all the complex resonances of a long tradition of literary epic and the resources of mythological allusion. Claudian plays upon his audience's knowledge of earlier epic, Virgil and Ovid in particular, in order to create an integrated piece of contemporary propaganda: James argues against the prevailing view that Claudian's poem is either ornamental or frivolous. She traces his construction of a grandiose and coherent allegory by which the pro-Christian Rufinus is identified with the snake-like denizens of hell, against whom the semi-barbarian Stilicho battles with Apolline attributes of purity and, of course, the divine qualities regularly associated with the honorand in panegyric. This rich fabric is, however, woven not for an emperor, but for his battling regents in the insecure atmosphere of barbarian incursions following the death of Theodosius I and the accession of his youthful heirs. Claudian's speech can be located at a precise historical moment and the panegyrist operates upon the sensibilities of his public by elaborate literary innuendo to secure a powerful and immediate impact. Perhaps most important of all is James' recognition that, although Claudian works within the pagan literary tradition, his allusive language carries Christian overtones in a world where Christian ideology drew upon the resources of the pagan past and the two cultures shared common convictions and preoccupations.

Watson's subject, the Gallic poet Sidonius Apollinaris, operates in a period of yet greater dynastic uncertainty and external insecurity. While his technique has often been compared to that of Claudian, Watson shows that this view is superficial. Writing a little over half a century later, Sidonius had the unenviable job of composing consular panegyrics for two western emperors, his father-in-law Avitus (AD 455–6) and the Constantinopolitan

Anthemius (AD 467–72), who were imposed upon the western empire in unsuccessful attempts to avert political disaster. Commissioned for grand ceremonial occasions, these poems had a complex diplomatic task: presentiation to the Roman Senate of an emperor not primarily of their own choosing, representing to the new leader the concerns of his people, and the creation of an atmosphere of continuity and stability in a desperate and chaotic political situation. Although Sidonius was in practice forced to change his message to accommodate the ever-changing state of affairs, astute deployment of traditional literary motifs, notably personified Roma, together with citation of patriotic comparisons with Republican and imperial history, enabled him to render unpalatable truths acceptable and paper over contemporary disruption to suggest a promising future. Unlike Claudian he does not construct large-scale mythical paradigms, but by elaborate pictorial detail disguises fundamental underlying change. He is hardly to be criticized for failing to acknowledge the fragility of the contemporary moment: that was never the panegyrist's task. It is noteworthy that, in contrast to the pagan Claudian, he does not use Christian overtones of hope for salvation, even though we know that Sidonius was ordained bishop soon after the composition of his poem for Anthemius.

Also of Gallic provenance, Hilary of Poitiers' *Against Constantius* takes us back to the troubled reign of Constantius II (AD 337–61). Humphries' discussion resumes several themes raised in earlier chapters. The Christian environment is now unequivocal in a work addressed by this veteran of contemporary Christological controversies to his fellow western bishops, but the full intent of this text has, like Julian's address to Eusebia, hitherto proved puzzling. Here too historical context determines tone, although in this case anti-imperial propaganda is carefully embedded within a larger text of different purpose, a theological disquisition for the edification of contemporary ecclesiastics. The core of Humphries' argument is that, in the sections of the work directly addressed to the emperor, Hilary exploits the resources of his classical education to pervert the conventions of imperial panegyric for purposes of ridicule. By parodying the themes of imperial *adventus*, by associating him with tyrannical leaders of the past and suggesting that he betrayed the ideals established by his father Constantine at Nicaea (AD 325), by arguing that his wars are directed against his

own churches, Hilary sets up Constantius and his religious policies as a laughing-stock for his fellow ecclesiastics. The audacity of this attack, in which Constantius is identified with Antichrist much in the way that Rufinus was linked by Claudian with the demonic residents of Hell, is redoubled by Humphries' acceptance of the view that the work was composed within Constantius' lifetime. Like Sidonius, Hilary is prepared to adapt his message to the times—in this case by reversing the deferential tone of his slightly earlier *Letter to Constantius*, in which he had requested an imperial audience in order to argue the adequacy of the Nicene creed. This text signals the passion with which an educated Christian might exploit the conventions of a familiar genre to preach his own polemic.

With Judith George's study of Venantius Fortunatus we remain in Gaul and return to the world of occasional poems, but leap forward two centuries to the new battleground of Merovingian politics. In a setting as volatile as that of Sidonius, Fortunatus aimed to convey stability and enhance authority by redeploying the materials and techniques of Roman celebration for these new leaders. By contrast with Hilary, there is no personal clash between imperial and Christian interests, but rather harmonious integration: Fortunatus is as ready to write for bishops as for worldly rulers, for Christian or secular occasions, and indeed for women as well as men. His early motive for writing was the desire for personal patronage; hence he selects and adapts from the standard palette of panegyrical topics to create encomia tailored to the individual honorand and occasion. But over the course of his career increasing political confidence and a clear moral stance can be observed, not least because Fortunatus' personal position became more secure. Now he was called upon to act as mediator in clashes between secular and ecclesiastical authority, a task undertaken with courage in defence of his patron, Gregory of Tours. As in the case of Themistius, it is possible to examine his development over a long career and in an even greater variety of contexts. The early ingenuity and later moral authority of his poems affirm the versatility of the genre, even in the new world of Merovingian machinations and Christian politics.

With Fortunatus we see traditional imperial panegyric firmly established in a Christian environment and the panegyrist moving easily between the demands of secular and religious patrons,

often integrating the two worlds. Half a century later on the other flank of the empire George of Pisidia was doing much the same (ch. 10). As official propagandist for the Emperor Heraclius (AD 610–41) his position was more akin to that of Themistius than the vagrant Fortunatus, but differed from both in the need to sustain the profile of Heraclius in his capital city during the latter's long absences on campaign in the East, at a time when Constantinople was under immediate threat from the assaults of Avars and Persians. Hence George is also closely associated with Heraclius' deputies, prominent among whom was the Patriarch Sergius, although it is likely that personal inclination as well as official policy prompted the conspicuous religious strand in his poetry. As with Claudian, George's poetry includes a substantial element of narrative epic, but now mythical, classical and biblical allusions are unapologetically intermingled. Analysis of George's panegyrics over the two decades of his activity reveals the careful promotion of a consistent series of imperial virtues, designed to present Heraclius as a pious, caring, intelligent and highly energetic ruler, sparing no personal sacrifice in order to promote his people's good. George may well be responding to specific resentments against Heraclius in Constantinople, although his is a case where dearth of reliable parallel evidence often leaves no better alternative than speculation. But even if we cannot be confident of recovering the underlying truth, George epitomizes consistent media massage in a period of immense uncertainty, danger and difficulty.

The concluding section of the volume follows the lead established by Braund, in focusing on panegyric embedded in a larger work of different overall character; but now the texts are all overtly Christian. Claudia Rapp examines the interpenetration of imperial panegyric and hagiography in fourth- and fifth-century Greek literature by focusing on the use of paradigm and comparison, most conspicuous in cases where a saint is likened favourably to an emperor and vice versa. The church historians—to be treated from a different angle by Theresa Urbainczyk—are a major source for saintly characterizations of emperors. Rapp's enquiry culminates in a fruitful examination of the development of Moses as an exemplary figure from Josephus to George of Pisidia and beyond: this reveals that Moses emerged as the prototype of the ideal bishop, while his combined political and religious leadership also made him an apposite paradigm for the Christian emperor, as

demonstrated by Eusebius' extensive use of the analogy in connection with Constantine. This study of a single central feature from the traditional panegyrical menu (analogous to that of Rees) is instructive in demonstrating the degree to which the positions of emperor and religious leader were assimilated in this period, and the simplicity and consistency of the technique by which that assimilation was achieved.

The last two chapters in the volume form a complementary pair in focusing on the new genre of ecclesiastical history which emerged as one element of Eusebius' celebration of Constantine as the first Christian emperor. But the two essays have somewhat different slants: Urbainczyk puts greater emphasis on the historian's perspective, Michael Whitby on the issue of historical truth. When panegyric is located within a historical work, the question of its relationship to truth is most vividly highlighted, since the historian is more conscious than the panegyrist of the need to produce an assessment that can stand the test of time. After Thucydides' programmatic statement (1.21–2), the association between history and truth became paramount. But how is truthfulness to be assessed? Lucian's formula (*How to Write History* 4–12) for distinguishing between panegyric and history according to a criterion of truth—the latter being the prerogative of history—, is too simplistic to be of much practical value. Urbainczyk rightly observes that all historical writing involves judgement, and Whitby highlights this awareness in Agathias.

In dealing with the living emperor Theodosius II, Socrates incorporates many traditional features of panegyric, while Sozomen makes this aspect explicit by dealing with Theodosius in an address prefaced to his work. But it is significant that the two authors choose to pinpoint different imperial virtues, a distinction best explained, in Urbainczyk's view, in terms of their personal preoccupations. Similarly distinctive emphases emerge in their respective handling of the first Christian emperor Constantine, the controversial bishop John Chrysostom, and the Emperor Julian, against whom Sozomen is much more virulent in invective than Socrates. Urbainczyk concludes that, taken together, these divergences are indicative of significant differences in overall standpoint between the two writers, which helps to reinstate Sozomen as an independent thinker. This study brings together examples of different models of leadership which can be instructively related

to several earlier chapters in the volume: its overall lesson must be the nebulous nature of truth, not only in panegyric, but also in the ostensibly more sober genre of history.

The histories of Socrates and Sozomen were continued in the late sixth century by Evagrius of Epiphania in Syria: his appraisals of emperors and bishops are related by Michael Whitby to other evidence, both elsewhere in Evagrius and in other sources. Whitby stresses that panegyric is by this time a well-established code, so that every writer is required to work creatively with stereotypes, and that imperial propaganda will also have influenced projection of the imperial image, which emperors may consciously have moulded to accord with public expectations. Close examination of Evagrius reveals considerable subtlety and variety: careful selection is made from a limited range of virtues to produce a picture which generally substantiates information elsewhere, although it often relies for impact on significant omission (silence on the Emperor Maurice's generosity, for example) or the particular colouring of a remark (Tiberius II's excessive openness). Evagrius writes most forcefully of those with whom he had some familiarity. His assessments may well be based, as in the case of Gregory of Antioch, upon personal knowledge of specific incidents and do not exclude citation of unfavourable material even in connection with those of whom Evagrius had a high opinion. Even in Evagrius, however, the pressures of the present are strong: depiction of figures from the past is coloured by a desire to maximize the pre-eminent virtues of the reigning emperor, Maurice, while the author's Antiochene background and personal connections also influence his views; he has a league-table of desirable virtues in which religion is at the top. Evagrius perhaps comes as close as any writer discussed in this volume to representing historical truth, but careful analysis indicates the limitations in this respect even of a meticulous historian: human nature being what it is, disclaimers about flattery can never be taken at face value.

Panegyrists are frequently at pains to asseverate the truth of their words and paradoxically arouse suspicion of fabrication or ignorance in doing so. Events more than a millenium old can only be known to us through the differing perspectives of contemporaries, and here panegyric and invective have as important a role to play as historiography in contributing to our understanding of contemporary responses. Panegyric cannot be dismissed as the empty and

formulaic adulation of the time-serving and self-interested. The works discussed in this volume were produced by the most intelligent and well-read men of their day who used the formulas of long-established tradition to construct a meaningful and individual message for the moment. It is the limitation of our own ignorance that we see most clearly the stereotype while being ill-equipped to recapture its impact in each new situation. The words and ceremonies of the recent funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales are an immediate reminder of the manner in which highly traditional sentiments and actions—and significant variation of them—can have a powerful and evocative message amidst the unforseen contingencies of the present. In analysing the nuances of surviving texts we seek to recover the atmosphere of a particular moment from its impact on a familiar template: success can never be more than partial, but that does not undermine the interest and value of the exercise.

THEORY AND PRACTICE

CHAPTER ONE

THE PANEGYRISTS AND THEIR TEACHERS

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§ 1

The extant panegyrics of the late empire can only be a small fraction of what that age produced. Every New Year, every imperial birthday or anniversary, will have been commemorated. Every incoming consul was expected to give thanks to the emperor. But what we possess is almost wholly the work of noted authors, in the corpus of whose works these pieces were included. It is so, for example, with Themistius, Libanius, Julian, Symmachus, and Sidonius. Some panegyrics owe their survival to false attribution or association: the address to an emperor (εἰς βασιλέα) preserved as *Or.* 35 of Aristides,[1] and the speech which is *Corpus Hermeticum* 18 are examples of this. The only significant exception to this state of affairs is the collection of the *Panegyrici Latini,* a fourth-century Gallo-Roman work by professional rhetors. Now the better the writer, the less dependent he is on school models; so that the limitations of our evidence need to be borne in mind in our reading both of the teachers and of the performers, if we want to say anything useful about the relation between them.

In what follows, I shall first say something of the tradition of epideictic rhetoric, and the teaching procedures associated with it, and then use some of the texts themselves to illustrate features which are common to them all, and which have their origins in the rhetorician's school. It is easier to do this than it would have been a few years ago, because of Laurent Pernot's magisterial *La Rhétorique de l'éloge dans le monde gréco-romain* (1993), though this concentrates on the Second Sophistic proper, and has no systematic treatment of the later period. I have confined myself to pagan texts,

[1] For the controversy about this speech see Behr 1981, 399f.

and to prose: the temptation to include Eusebius and Claudian has been resisted.

§2

Our panegyrists were indeed heirs to a long tradition, going back to classical Athens or beyond. One salutary reminder of this is the speech Plato puts into the mouth of Agathon in the *Symposium* (194eff.), as a formal encomium of Eros. This is evidently a pastiche or parody, though not necessarily a hostile one; its characteristic features must therefore have been already familiar. They are features familiar throughout the history of the genre. One is generous signposting: 'I wish first to tell you how I must speak, and then to speak.' Menander Rhetor's advice (372.14ff. Spengel) is not much more than an expansion of this: 'When you pass from one heading to another, there should be a *prooemium* relating to the subject you are about to address, so as to make the hearer attentive and not allow the intended scheme of headings to go unnoticed and concealed.' Secondly, there is a clear distinction between 'encomium', which is due to the god for what he does, and 'congratulation' (the verb is εὐδαιμονίζειν) due to men for their fortunate reception of his blessings. This foreshadows the philosophical and rhetorical 'problematics' of praise, which we shall see in various contexts. Thirdly, there is a very clear structure, in which the nature of the god comes first and his virtues next. The 'virtues', too, are the cardinal virtues which are to be praised in man: justice, temperance, courage, and wisdom. This is a constant theme in the whole tradition. What may be the earliest theoretical treatment (*Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* 1441b) emphasizes both these cardinal virtues and the need for a summary and clear signposting at each stage. Despite the multiplicity of virtues which later imperial propaganda and philosophical ethics developed, the original four are often to be seen: *continentia, fortitudo, iustitia, prudentia* appear together in the panegyric of 307 to Maximian and Constantine (*Pan. Lat.* VII (VI) 3–5). Plato—*Symposium* and *Phaedrus* —remained important in all the later tradition. But there were other models as well. These were the Athenian funeral speeches on the war-dead, especially the Periclean version in Thucydides and the pastiche in Plato's *Menexenus*, which was taken seriously

and much discussed.[2] There was also the first 'encomium' of an individual, Isocrates' *Evagoras* (365 BC), and Xenophon's *Agesilaus* (360 BC).

These kinds of 'celebratory' oratory were quite distinct in aim from the 'forensic' and 'deliberative' types, on which—and particularly on the 'forensic'—rhetorical teaching naturally concentrated. This tripartite division of rhetoric is certainly pre-Aristotelian, but Aristotle rationalized it by associating the three kinds (a) with 'past', 'present' and 'future' events—court-cases are about the past, deliberation about the future, and celebration about the present—and also (b) with the concepts of 'the just', 'the expedient', and 'the noble'. Of course, a speech might partake of more kinds than one. Plato's *Apology of Socrates* was seen ([Dion. Hal.] *Ars rhetorica* 305 U–R) not only as a defence in court, but as an attack on the accusers and an encomium of, and exhortation to, philosophy. And clearly 'encomia topics'—family, background, life-style, achievements—were often of service in defence speeches, or in recommending a policy: Cicero's *De imperio Cn. Pompei* is a classic example of the latter development. However, the tripartite division gives a generally valid classification of most public discourse.

§ 3

But what should the 'third kind' be called? There was little agreement about this, and four main alternatives were canvassed. The implications of each of them, not usually brought out in the ancient material, are worth spelling out here.[3]

(i) Praise (ἔπαινος, *laus*) and its opposite (ψόγος, *uituperatio*). These terms describe a central feature of ceremonial oratory, perhaps even a necessary one, for it is difficult to think of an occasion which does not demand something of this. They also bring a moral dimension into the matter. It is not only in the *Rhetoric* but in the *Ethics*[4] that Aristotle discusses the problematics of praise. *Alia optanda, alia laudanda,* says Cicero (*De oratore* 2.342), following Academic and Peripatetic tradition: external blessings are to be prayed

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[2] Cf. (e.g.) Dionysius Halicarnassus, *On the style of Demosthenes* 30; Cicero, *Orator* 151.

[3] See in general Russell and Wilson 227 and Introduction xxviii.

[4] *EN* 1101b10, 1127b18; *EE* 1219b15, 1223a10.

for, virtue is to be praised. Yet virtue shows itself in our reactions to fortune, so that the two cannot be completely separated. That only the philosopher can give true praise is, naturally enough, a leitmotiv with the philosopher–panegyrist Themistius.[5] The further refinement of a division of 'goods' into three—externals, those of body, and those of soul—also plays a part in rhetorical precept, but is sometimes rejected. Such things are of less practical use than the identification of types of behaviour which are generally thought to deserve more than usual approval: e.g. altruistic, unique, or unrewarded actions, encountering danger for others, or behaving with regularity in a way that indicates a settled virtuous disposition. These matters are discussed by Aristotle (*Rhetoric* A 9) and Cicero (*De oratore* 2.343ff.), and are often taken up later.

(ii) 'Encomium' (ἐγκώμιον) is a word whose origin was disputed. Did it come from κῶμος, 'a party of revellers', or from κώμη, 'a village', where (presumably) the celebration of victory took place? The same dispute raged over the derivation of κωμῳδία, 'comedy'. It is irrelevant to the use of the term, which is probably at all periods the commonest way of describing the extended praise of individuals. It is sometimes distinguished from 'praise' (ἔπαινος) as being extended in length—a whole speech, not just a few words—and always from ὕμνος, 'hymn', which is the proper word for the praise of a god.[6]

(iii) 'Panegyric' (πανηγυρικός) is an adjective derived from πανήγυρις, 'a great festival'. It thus denotes the occasion on which or in honour of which the speech was given. From the early fourth century BC, speeches were delivered by famous orators at major festivals. Gorgias and Lysias spoke at Olympia, both with a political message. Isocrates' *Panegyricus* (380 BC) pretends to be delivered in similar circumstances. In later times, the word has both a narrower and a wider meaning. Narrowly, it denotes a speech which describes and praises a particular festival;[7] more widely, it becomes a blanket term for all sorts of discourse which cannot be described as forensic or deliberative. It reaches its broadest application in Hermogenes,[8] for whom Plato is the model of the 'pure panegyric'

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[5] E.g. *Or.* 1.1a, 3c–d, 18b; 2 θεωρία; 3.44d, 46a.

[6] Pernot 1993, 118ff.

[7] So in [Dion. Hal.] *Ars rhetorica* 255ff. U–R, trans. Russell and Wilson 362ff. The type example is the *Sminthiakos* in Menander Rhetor (437–46 Spengel).

[8] 403ff. Rabe, translation in Wooten 1987, 124ff.

style, and historians and poets come under the same general head. This is said in a work on types of style; and Hermogenes' point seems to be that grandeur and other qualities of style (what he calls ἰδέαι) are attained in a different mode in 'panegyric' literature from that which is to be found in practical oratory (πολιτικὸς λόγος). This perception is not without bearing on 'panegyric' in the narrower sense. In the speeches with which we are concerned, imitation of Plato and the historians, and indeed use of the poets, is common, and these are features which are very rarely found in forensic or deliberative oratory.

(iv) Finally, 'epideictic' (ἐπιδεικτικός; *genus demonstratiuum*). This was Aristotle's term. In accordance with his association of the genre with the description of the present, he seems to have thought of it as meaning that this sort of oratory 'displays' or 'demonstrates' (ἐπιδεικνύναι) how things are. But more usually, the 'display' or 'demonstration' is thought of as that of the orator, putting his skill on show. In this sense, the term covers every kind of speech that has no practical purpose, in other words whenever the audience is made up of appreciative spectators who are not decision-makers. The broadest sense of 'epideictic' in modern treatments of the subject is that of T.C. Burgess in *Epideictic Literature* (1902), still a useful book. Here it embraces all sorts of philosophical or 'bellettristic' writing as well as encomium. This is historically unhelpful, but it is well to be reminded how ill-defined the genres of prose literature are.

§ 4

These imperial panegyrics represent only a small part of what was recognized at all times as epideictic or encomium. They all have some sort of political purpose. They are all primarily about individual rulers. They are all serious, and are meant for public performance, though this may sometimes be a fiction. Epideictic theory and practice covered a much wider field. The first of the two treatises ascribed to Menander[9] shows this most clearly. It deals systematically—and with some originality—with various kinds of hymns to gods, and then with 'praise of lands and cities'.

[9] 'Menander I' (= 331–67 Spengel): see Russell and Wilson xxixf. for a general characterization.

This second theme is relevant to our panegyrics also, because it is an element in many of the speeches we are to consider; it is an essential part of speeches of welcome, and praise of an honorand's birthplace regularly follows this pattern. There were classical models available: Xenophon's Πόροι (*Ways and Means*) and Plato's *Critias* on Athens, and much material in the historians. 'Menander I' is very scholastic. He distinguishes 'position' (θέσις), 'nature' (φύσις), 'origin' (γένος), and 'accomplishments' or 'suitabilities' (ἐπιτηδεύματα). He is thus adapting for inanimate objects the pattern of nature, nurture and achievement which was appropriate to human subjects. Quintilian makes this transference explicit (3.8.26): 'cities are praised in the same way as men. The founder takes the place of the parent ... and the virtues and vices shown by actions are the same as in individuals.' In the normal pattern of personal encomia, 'origin' includes the native country or city of the honorand, so that the techniques of praising this have their place in the larger work. On occasion, there can be quite an elaborate development. Pacatus' panegyric of Theodosius[10] contains a good example. Theodosius' home *city* was undistinguished, and so his *country* is chosen instead. It is Spain, a land on which the creator has lavished peculiar indulgence. Exempt from excesses of heat and cold, it is set apart as a kind of 'second world' within its mountain and sea frontiers. It has cities, fertile lands, gold and other metals. No legendary land, however rich, is its equal. It is the mother of soldiers, generals, orators, poets, judges, and emperors: Trajan, Hadrian, and now Theodosius. Crete boasts of Jupiter's birth, perhaps a mere fable: 'Spain has produced the god we see.' The Latin orator has learned his epideictic lessons well, but he has learned not only from the rhetors but from Virgil. His *adde tot egregias ciuitates* ('add so many splendid cities') is taken from *Georgics* 2.155, and his remarks on the climate, the inferiority of legendary paradises, and especially his culminating praise of Spain as a mother of heroes, are all based on Virgil's *laudes Italiae*, ('praise of Italy') itself a testimony to a rhetorical tradition which the poet easily transcends.

Again, our panegyrics are all serious. The notion that any is meant with malice or irony is hard to sustain. However, the epideictic tradition, from the very beginning, included speeches

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[10] Cf. Nixon and Rodgers 451 on this passage (§ 4).

written for fun, and often without any special contemporary point. Right at the start, Gorgias calls what is formally a defence of Helen an 'encomium' of her, and his own 'game' (παίγνιον). The 'paradoxical' encomia—Death, Fever, Salt, Thersites, A Fly, Dust—are all 'games'.[11] Polycrates, an older contemporary of Isocrates, was an early composer of such trifles, and the practice went on at all periods. So did the educational practice of composing short encomia on historical or mythological characters. A papyrus of the third century BC[12] shows that subjects like Minos, Rhadamanthus and Tydeus were used. Cicero (*De oratore* 2.341) mentions written Greek *laudationes*, designed for pleasure, of various historical characters. The encomia of Themistocles and Aristides which he mentions must be exercises. Encomia of this kind formed part of the regular curriculum of *progymnasmata* ('elementary exercises'). Libanius' collection of these exercises, which may serve as an example, contains encomia of Diomedes, Odysseus, Achilles, Thersites (paradoxical), Demosthenes, The Farmer's Life, An Ox, and The Palm and The Apple. He also gives corresponding exercises in blame (ψόγος): Achilles (again), Hector, Philip, Aeschines, Wealth, Poverty, and The Vine. As we shall see, the technical advice given for this sort of thing covers much of the instruction necessary for the full-blown encomium.

Nor was it only in the schools that encomia were composed. We hear,[13] sporadically in Hellenistic times and more regularly in the Roman period, of competitions in which encomia, both prose and verse, were awarded prizes. No such competition piece, so far as we know, is among the extant orations; but there must have been hundreds of them, and no doubt much of the school teaching was aimed at success in these displays. The situation was of course artificial: it was a competition (ἀγών) of a sort, a conflict with rivals, but remote from the real political and personal anxieties of addresses to emperors or governors in person. It was natural that poetry as well as prose should be so practised. Neither of the other two main branches of rhetoric was in any way a substitute for poetry, but epideictic was. 'Encomia' and 'hymns' were poetic genres in archaic

[11] See Menander Rhetor 346.17 Spengel, A.S. Pease, 'Things without Honour', *CP* 21 (1926) 27–42; for Lucian's 'Encomium of a Fly', the most striking extant example, see Bompaire 1958, 282–4.

[12] *P.Mil. Vogliano* III 123: see Pernot 1993, 93.

[13] Pernot 1993, 49ff.

and classical Greece. Pindar's victory odes have a good deal in common with the later rhetoric of congratulation: family, country, achievement are regular topics in both. When Isocrates came to write the prose *Evagoras*, and to claim it as an innovation, he drew a contrast between poets' and prose-writers' handling of such material: the poets had more ornaments of language at their disposal and could make gods associate and converse with men (*Evagoras* 8–11). This became a standard topic.[14] It corresponds with practice: in the prose and verse encomia of the late empire, the difference can be plainly seen. Claudian's or Sidonius' verse panegyrics differ mainly from their prose equivalents in the amount of mythology and *prosopopoeia* ('fictitious speech'; see further below) which they use, not in the actual sequence of themes. But the contrast is perhaps not always as simple as it seems. What are we to make of Themistius' words to Theodosius in 384 (*Or.* 18.218c–d)? He contrasts the present occasion, when Theodosius, impatient to hear the words of philosophy, shows that it is the truth and not fine words that he wants, with a previous one which is a little mysterious. Fine words he has indeed had: a 'Boeotian song', 'brilliant and sublime praise, cast in lofty terms and coming from Helicon itself'. Does this really mean a poem? The older commentators seem to think so: a poet, either Boeotian himself or Pindaric-style, says Petavius, has praised the emperor. But fine oratory is often described as song, especially if its delivery attracts criticism,[15] and 'Boeotian', if not denoting the home of the speaker, could be a derogatory term. The contrast between philosophical praise and flattery is a constant theme of Themistius; that between poetry and prose is hardly relevant to his case.

§ 5

It would be tedious and unnecessary to review the evidence for the teaching of encomium.[16] Not that it is at all voluminous compared with the instructional texts about forensic speeches and declamations. This is because epideictic was a minor activity in classical

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[14] Cf. Lucian, *De conscribenda historia* 8, Aristides, *Hymn to Sarapis* (= *Or.* 45) 1–14.

[15] Cf. the passages collected by Norden 1958, 294f.

[16] A sketch in Russell and Wilson xiii–xxxi.

times, and there were relatively few models. The educational tradition, in fact, never really caught up with the real situation under the empire, when epideictic was the centre of activity for many orators, though of course forensic and deliberative speeches were still needed. Nevertheless, there is a fair amount of material; and a few remarks on some of the most important texts are all that is possible here.

Aelius Theon, the first-century author of the earliest extant set of *progymnasmata*,[17] apologizes for including encomium among the exercises he prescribes. He does so, he says, because students are often asked to write such things, although an encomium is really a subject for a complete speech (ὑπόθεσις). He promises a separate treatment of the full theory (τεχνολογία). This we do not possess; and it is worth asking what it might have contained. In the *progymnasma* prescription, most of the standard topics seem already to be present: the tripartite division of goods, the types of actions—altruistic, unique, beyond expectation—which demand special praise, and so on. But there are some new points: emphasis on the value of quoting authority—it is to Helen's credit that Theseus admired her (cf. Isocrates, *Helen* 38); and a suggestion that 'what might have happened' is a useful theme—suppose Alexander had lived longer (we may compare Livy 9.17–19, on the likely outcome of a conflict between Alexander and Rome). Finally, something may be made of significant names: 'Demosthenes' means 'people's strength'. Many Greek names are significant in this way; not so Roman names, and the late Latin rhetor Emporius can find a rhetorical use for a play on 'Caesar', 'Cicero', and 'Servilius' only in a context of *uituperatio* ('invective').[18] Both the 'what might have been' topic and this note on names shows that Theon's prescription is angled mainly towards school exercises.

Having enumerated these τόποι, 'topics', he proceeds to tell the student how to use them. First, *prooemium*; then external and bodily goods, beginning with the subject's birth, and making it clear that he used his advantages wisely and appropriately, remaining modest in success and not abusing his physical attractions to the

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[17] Text in Spengel, *Rhetores Graeci* II 59–130; ed. (with translation) by Butt 1987.

[18] Halm 1863, 568. The Roman names do not lend themselves to encomium: *Caesar* is supposed to come from *a caeso matris utero* ('cut from his mother's womb') or *cum caesarie natus* ('born with long flowing hair'), *cicer* means 'chickpea' or 'wart'; and Servilius can only suggest slavery.

detriment of his reputation for virtue. If he lacks these outward blessings, we press the point that he surmounted his misfortunes nobly, not becoming aggressive or servile in poverty. To rise in the world from humble circumstances, or to transcend the disadvantages of a lowly profession, is something to be admired. Simon the Socratic shoemaker and Leontion the Epicurean prostitute became philosophers. So far the speech will have been devoted to the early stages of a panegyric: birth, birthplace, education. The next stage follows: actions and successes, not in chronological order but under the heads of the virtues, making it very plain what he has done to exhibit each several virtue. Finally, the student must avoid turning the encomium into an *apologia* by mentioning faults or mistakes too obviously.

So what would a full τεχνολογία contain? In forensic and deliberative rhetoric, there is a clear distinction between the preliminary process of *inuentio,* in which we follow certain rules (or our own good sense) in isolating the relevant topics, and the subsequent stage of disposing the 'invented' material in the parts of the speech. In epideictic, this was thought to be less important. 'In panegyric', writes an unknown rhetor, 'the nature of the facts is the unchangeable law of the order of the headings.'[19] This means that the natural order of 'invention' was also, in general, the natural order of exposition. There is not the need to cover one's tracks, or to delude or cajole the hearer, because he is in any case well-disposed, and only has to admire. Reading the more sophisticated panegyrics, however, soon shows that this is an over-simplification. So it might just be that Theon's 'advanced technology' dealt with sophisticated arrangement; but it does not seem very likely. What is needed seems rather to be a technique of adapting the pattern to different sorts of persons and occasions. Theon's prescription appears primarily suitable either for mythological and historical exercises or for the encomium of a young person in private life. These are the likely circumstances of the school. Kings, governors, and great festivals are not in view. It may well be that a τεχνολογία covering all this was available in Theon's time; at least that seems the most probable explanation of his promise.

With Theon's contemporary, Quintilian, we find a Roman gloss put on the familiar theory. He begins (3.7.1) by citing the

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[19] [Hermogenes] 440.18 Rabe.

Peripatetic view that epideictic had no practical purpose, but was solely related to the audience. Roman usage, he observes, does not support this, since funeral speeches have a public function and are often authorized by the Senate, while both praise and blame play a large part in court and in senatorial speeches. That official funeral speeches could resemble the Greek panegyric pattern is evident, for example, from Tacitus' summary (*Ann.* 13.3) of the speech composed by Seneca for Nero to deliver at Claudius' funeral: first, family and the consulships and triumphs of ancestors; next, Claudius' learning and the freedom from disaster of his reign; finally—and it raised a laugh—Claudius' 'prudence and wisdom'. Of course, Quintilian continues, praise of gods or the great men of the past is mere *ostentatio* (i.e. ἐπίδειξις, 'show'). But even this demands a sort of proof. If you choose to assert the divine birth of Romulus and his rearing by the she-wolf, you have to make it seem probable, e.g. by arguing that he did not drown when he was thrown into the river, that his heroism makes it plausible that he was the child of Mars, and that contemporaries believed him to have ascended into heaven.[20] Quintilian then observes that such encomia may involve an element of defence, as in the story of Hercules and Omphale. The essence of encomium however lies not in argument but in amplification (*amplificare et ornare,* i.e. αὔξησις).

The main division of the material with which Quintilian begins his account of the praise of an individual is, so far as we know, new, though it is very simple and obvious. It divides the subject into 'before', 'during', and 'after' the life of the 'honorand'. This division is taken up later by Emporius.[21] 'Before' covers country and ancestry. Either he is worthy of his noble birth, or he has dignified his humble origins by his achievements. Prophecies about his birth also come in here. 'During' covers all the events of his life; and these are divided, in a familiar way, into external goods and goods of body and of soul. True praise attaches to the mind. Two ways of organizing the subject are available: by chronology or according to the virtues. Which we choose depends

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[20] The probability or improbability of mythical stories was a topic in rhetorical education: cf. Aphthonius, *Progymnasmata* 27–32 Spengel for instruction on the demolition (ἀνασκευή) and confirmation (κατασκευή) of the story of Apollo and Daphne. Quintilian is simply pointing out that this sort of work can be relevant also in encomia.

[21] 567.25–9 Halm.

on the material. We have always to keep in mind—here again is a familiar emphasis—that uniqueness, originality, and altruism are powerful topics. 'After' is not always a possible theme: if it is, it relates to public honours, famous literary works, cities founded, laws laid down, arts invented. It is obviously appropriate for historical encomia, not for anything relating to the present day.

Thus, although Quintilian does recognize the public function of epideictic, he too is largely concerned with school exercises; and he has no advice to offer on the public speeches of this kind which, for example, his younger contemporaries, Pliny and Tacitus, were obliged to give. They could not learn from Quintilian how a consul should thank an emperor.

§ 6

It is in a considerably later text that we find a τεχνολογία which fills at least some of the gaps left by Theon and Quintilian. This is the second of the two Menandrean treatises, 'Menander II', which dates from the late third century, probably (cf. 415.6 Spengel) from a time when there was a plurality of emperors. It is thus of about the same date as the earliest speeches in the *Panegyrici Latini.*

The characteristic of this book, and of the very similar treatise falsely attributed to Dionysius of Halicarnassus,[22] is the separate treatment of different occasions. The encomium structure—origins, early life, achievements, virtues, comparisons with others—is standard in all; but the detail and the tone are adapted to circumstances, and the author seems to want to provide for all contingencies. However, his list of themes is far from exhaustive. Some of the occasions commonest in extant panegyrics—New Year, consulship, accession anniversary, imperial birthday—are still absent. Presumably these types became more important only after Menander's time, in an age when court ceremony developed so much. And it is still the case that the bulk of the instruction offered applies primarily to private and academic life. This is true of the λαλιά or 'talk' (3), in which a generous display of learning in a simple and un-periodic style flatters and woos an audience of equals and elegantly emphasizes the cultural unity of the empire-wide literary

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[22] Translation in Russell and Wilson 362ff.

élite. It is true also of the προπεμπτικὴ λαλιά, in which an old poetical tradition is given oratorical shape to speed a friend or fellow-student on his way. It is manifestly true of the speeches concerned with marriage and birthdays (6–8) and of the speech of leave-taking (συντακτικός), where the situation envisaged is again that of student life. It is true, moreover, of the emotional lament (μονῳδία), which is concerned with an individual death, not (as with some extant 'monodies') with a disaster to a city.

But other speeches are firmly within the public sphere. The 'address' (προσφωνητικός) is the universally practised speech of welcome to a visiting governor (cf. also [Dion. Hal.] 272–7 U–R). It comes complete with 'actions' divided under the cardinal virtues, comparisons, and praise of the city which is the object of the visit. It is, however, not quite a full encomium. We are advised only to touch briefly on the praises of the emperor. The 'crown speech' (στεφανωτικός) (12) is the address accompanying the presentation of a gold crown to the emperor. Themistius' *Oration* 3 (entitled πρεσβευτικός) is an example of this genre. Not very like Menander's prescription in structure (its circumstances are peculiar) it is comparatively short, not much longer than the '300 *stichoi*' (i.e. about 200 lines of a modern printed text) which Menander recommends as the maximum desirable. Menander's own 'ambassador's speech' (πρεσβευτικός) (12) is rather similar; like the 'crown speech' it is part of a ceremony, and at the end of it the orator hands over a decree which the governor is asked to consider. This speech is set in Ilium—i.e. Alexandria Troas—and the city is represented as needing urgent subsidies to rebuild its public monuments. Alexandria Troas is also the scene of the 'speech of invitation' (κλητικός), in which the governor is invited to a festival. Its primary content is encomium of the festival and the city; but encomium of the emperor is now obligatory (ἀναγκαίως, 424.17 Spengel). The last speech in the collection is also set at Alexandria Troas: it is the *Sminthiakos* (17), which celebrates the festival of Apollo Smintheus at Chryse. This is an elaborate and impressive piece, with a good deal of mythological and philosophical ornament.

But the prescription which is most relevant to the imperial panegyrics is, of course, the *basilikos* (1), with which the collection begins. Its subject, the emperor, is a very lofty one: ἄγαν ἔνδοξον τὸ πρόσωπον, 'the person is of very high prestige'. No ambivalence is possible. The *prooemium* therefore dwells on the grandeur of the

subject: to honour god and the king are the two most important things in life. A 'second *prooemium*' comes from the idea that it would take a Homer or an Orpheus to do justice to the subject. Where, indeed, can one begin? After the *prooemia* comes 'native country' or 'city', only to be included if something good can be made of it. So also with the subject's family, to be omitted if unworthy 'as by Callinicus in his Great Basilikos'. This is Callinicus of Petra, a third-century rhetor known to have addressed Gallienus, though this can hardly be the speech here alluded to, because the point would not apply to that emperor, who was of quite distinguished ancestry. A late example, Procopius of Gaza's encomium of Anastasius,[23] neatly illustrates these last two points. He expatiates on Epidamnus (Durazzo), Anastasius' home town, but says nothing about his family.

Next comes 'birth'. If there is any remarkable circumstance, the speaker should not omit it, and should keep the stories of Romulus and Cyrus in mind. Nor should he hesitate to invent, because the audience is bound to accept the encomium without putting it to the test. Nature, too: was the child radiant in beauty as he left his mother's womb? And education: in the purple, or in the hardships of the camp? Best of all, both: 'you were swaddled in purple' (ἐσπαργανώθης ἐν ἀλουργίσι) and brought up amid cold and battle on the Danube front, says Themistius of the young Valentinian.[24] The Latin panegyric of Maximian[25] has an extraordinary adaptation of these topics. Passing over country (Pannonia) and 'divine' origin in a few words, he comes to Maximian's childhood on the frontier: the clash of arms mingled with the baby's cries. 'This is a fiction when it is told of Jupiter; of you, it is true.'

We proceed next to what the author calls 'suitabilities' or 'accomplishments' (ἐπιτηδεύματα), which are qualities of character not directly involved in the main action of the emperor's life. These actions naturally constitute the principal subject of the whole speech. The author reminds us here that, at each point in the speech, we should adduce a comparison (σύγκρισις), from Greek or Roman history: this applies both to the topics already handled (birth, upbringing) and to all the rest. At the end, also, there is to be a general comparison. This is a very important point. It is the habit

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23 See the edition (with French translation) of Chauvot 1986.
24 Themistius, *Or.* 9.121a.
25 *Pan. Lat.* X (II) 2.

of adducing these parallels which, as well as amplifying the speech, gives a historical perspective to the whole, and so ensures the honorand the immortality of a hero. Best, of course, if he can be shown to surpass the great men of the past. This is the case with Anastasius, according to Procopius: this virtuous emperor is seen, at various junctures, to outdo Philip of Macedon, the Athenians, Alexander, Lysander, Aristides, Themistocles and Pausanias, while the general comparison at the end matches him, whole career for whole career, with Cyrus, Agesilaus and (once again) Alexander.

As to 'actions', Menander's recommendation is that war should come first, and peace second, unless the emperor has never fought a war. (This last situation may be illustrated by 'Aristides', *Or.* 35, where the emperor—commonly believed to be Philip the Arabian—is clearly an administrator rather than a soldier.) Courage and wisdom are the virtues revealed in war; and the topic offers opportunities for geographical descriptions, narratives of battles, and Homeric parallels. This is all very grand; but (374.6) 'you will also have an opportunity to relax (ἀνεῖναι) in the middle of the speech—this is an innovation we have learned from recent writers[26]—and let a country or a river speak, as in a play.' So, a *prosopopoeia*: Menander's Homeric example is taken from the complaint of the River Scamander about the corpses that block his waters (*Il.* 21.214). This passage, applied to the Danube, is also used, curiously enough, both by Themistius and by Symmachus in 370.[27] It is interesting that the *prosopopoeia*, which is very much a poetical device (common in Claudian, for example), is here regarded as offering relief from the high formality of the speech. There are many examples of it in our texts: Pacatus makes the *res publica* address Theodosius, and the cardinal virtues speak in turn; Themistius puts a long speech into the mouth of Apollo; Mamertinus imagines 'god' restoring the usurpers Nepotianus and Silvanus to life and counselling them on the virtuous life that an emperor must lead.[28] Such variation of style and delivery (*prosopopoeia* requires some histrionic skill) is only a momentary relaxation; the whole section on war is on a high level, and nothing should be allowed to diminish the impact of the

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26 I.e. there is no classical precedent, but only some in Second Sophistic writing.

27 Themistius, *Or.* 10.133b; Symmachus, *In Valentinianum* 2.26 (328 Seeck).

28 Pacatus, *Pan. Lat.* II (XII) 11, 40; Themistius, *Or.* 19.226a–7b; Mamertinus, *Pan. Lat.* III (XI) 13.

story of the emperor's prowess and his humanity and magnanimity in victory.

Hactenus armatae laudes.[29] Peace comes next. The headings are those of the remaining cardinal virtues: justice, temperance and wisdom (which is of course needed in both places). The empress comes in under 'temperance'. Procopius (*Anastasius* 23) is particularly blatant about this: his emperor's faithfulness to his wife shows that he masters his desires. And at the end we are to have a comment on the emperor's good fortune, and a general comparison of his reign with others. We should be careful, however, not to disparage the predecessor too much: that would be ἄτεχνον, 'bad craftsmanship', because (presumably) it does not do your honorand much good if those compared with him are seen to be scarcely worth surpassing. The epilogue describes the happy state of a peaceful world under an emperor whose wars have driven back the barbarians and given us a good supply of slaves, and whose justice guarantees the blessings which the gods vouchsafe to a just king. May he live long and his children succeed him!

Lieu and Montserrat[30] remark, when discussing Libanius, *Or.* 59, which is relatively close to Menander's suggestions, that 'whereas Menander seems to have a rather cynical view of how to manipulate fact, fiction, and rhetoric, to present the optimum picture of the subject, Libanius is much more earnest'. This is indeed a compliment to Libanius; he has learned his lesson well, and evidently impressed his modern readers as he would have wished. But how 'cynical' is Menander? It seems a hard word. The rhetorician's job is to teach how to present a case. It is not for him to judge how good it is, or how dear to the speaker's heart. For most of the panegyrists of the late empire—though not for the great men whose works dominate the texts we possess, who all had serious political positions to maintain—the emperor was a remote figure, indeed like a god, since his favour or disfavour might mean peace or ruin. One had to offer one's praises as though the regime was eternal, but in the knowledge that it might be another emperor next year. St. Augustine (*Confessions* 6.6) knew that the official speech he was

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29 Claudian, *De consulatu Stilichonis* 2.1: gentler virtues follow: *nunc qualibus orbem / moribus et quanto frenet metuendus amore ... mitior incipiat fidibus iam Musa remissis* ('Thus far the praise of arms; now let my gentler Muse relax the strings and tell by what virtues he controls the world, and with how much love he tempers fear ...').

30 1996, 161.

obliged to make would be lies, and the audience would know this and approve. Most of those who did such things would know this too; but not all would care.

§ 7

It would be wrong to suppose that the main impact of rhetorical teaching on the trainee panegyrist came from instruction in speech-planning of the kind that we see in 'Menander'. Far more fundamental and pervasive was the daily round of practice in all kinds of exercises. It is not easy to form a picture of this, but there are some texts that throw light. Fronto, for example, writes to M. Aurelius[31] to criticize a speech, and incidentally to draw a contrast between the philosopher's classroom and the rhetor's. In the philosopher's class, he says, you read a book aloud, you listen to the teacher's interpretation and nod your head to show you understand; when other students take their turn to read, you take a little nap. You hear them discussing logic: 'If it is day, there is light',[32] they say, and all the time the windows are wide open! You go home without a care: no homework, nothing to learn or write, no exercises in synonyms or translation from the Greek. All these things, Fronto implies, make the rhetorical school the greater challenge. In another part of the correspondence[33] Marcus has been doing a set of exercises on 'imagery' (εἰκόνες), and he is puzzled over Exercise 9, which is to make a simile using the notion of 'an island in a lake which is itself on an island'. The larger island in question is Ischia (Aenaria). Fronto has little difficulty: the image would do well in a *gratiarum actio* (speech of thanks) to Antoninus. The main island stands for Antoninus, who resists the storms of the world; the inner island is Marcus, protected but still enjoying the advantage of being an island. Fronto goes on to give some theory about εἰκόνες, using a lot of Greek technical terms, because theory remained always a Greek rather than a Roman subject.[34]

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31 Fronto, *De eloquentia* 5 (151 van den Hout).
32 For this logical example see Epictetus 1.29.51.
33 *Ad M. Caesarem* 3.7f. (40f. van den Hout).
34 See Russell 1990, 10-17.

Another shaft of light on the teacher and the school comes from a much later work, Choricius of Gaza's funeral oration on his teacher Procopius:[35]

> And what was he like with his students? No non-Attic word escaped his notice, no thought that strayed from the purpose, no syllable that spoilt the rhythm, no arrangement of words that destroyed the pleasure. It would have been easier for a false note on the lyre to escape the notice of Arion of Methymna or Terpander of Lesbos than for an unrhythmical phrase to escape Procopius.

This emphasis on purity—Attic in Greek, Cicero or Sallust in Latin—and on rhythm—accentual by Choricius' time, and indeed by that of Themistius, but still quantitative in the Latin *panegyrici*—should never be forgotten. Our ears and our sensitivity are indeed defective; but that these things were a prime concern of the orators, and that the value of their gift to the honorand depended on the quality of their craftsmanship, we must at least recognize in principle, however difficult it is to see it all in detail.

Now the permanence of the gift depends on its quality as a written text. It was meant to last. Julian (*Or.* 2.10) claims to repay his many debts to the Empress Eusebia by making the memory of her deeds immortal; this is the fundamental claim of the panegyrist. Isocrates, the classical model of epideictic, had perfected a writing style, what Aristotle calls γραφικὴ λέξις, so composed as to be intelligible to distant or future readers without the need of gesture or an actor's reading (ὑπόκρισις). Since no system of punctuation had been developed as an indication of how a sentence should be read, syntax and rhythm had to give the necessary clues. This Isocratean tradition of careful composition provided the norm for all later epideictic. Reference to the need for written preparation is common. Themistius, when confronted with the need for a speech, puts his hand on his writing materials, so as to add the fruits of the school (τὰ ἐκ τῆς σχολῆς) to the impromptu sentiments of the Senate.[36] Improvisation is a bad thing in these circumstances: 'a man who speaks impromptu before a Roman emperor does not understand the greatness of the *imperium*', says a panegyrist of Constantine at Trier in 310.[37] Preparation was essential:

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[35] *Or.* 7.8 (112 Foerster-Richtsteig).

[36] *Or.* 16.199c–200c.

[37] *Pan. Lat.* VI (VII) 1.2 *qui apud imperatorem populi Romani dicit ex tempore, quantum sit non sentit imperium.*

witness also Pliny's story of Verginius Rufus (*Epist.* 2.1.5) who was practising for his *gratiarum actio* when he dropped the book and fell and broke his hip in trying to pick it up.[38] Would he have *read* his speech in the Senate on the day? Probably. Any very important speech tended to be written.[39] Many ceremonial speeches were certainly read out: Cassius Dio's account[40] of the orations pronounced at Augustus' funeral is explicit: Drusus 'read' (ἀνέγνω) his speech, and so did Tiberius (ἐπελέξατο, ἀνέγνω). The consequences of this for the manner of delivery are uncertain: gestures are restricted if one has to hold a roll or a codex or even some tablets. Nothing in what the rhetoricians say about memory or gesture informs us about this;[40a] but then, rhetorical instruction was intended primarily for law-courts and assemblies, and one could hardly expect much advice about ceremonial.

In any case, the amount of notice which the speaker had must have varied greatly. For a funeral, not long. For a New Year or accession anniversary, perhaps a considerable time. The rapidity of the honorand's achievement could even give rise to a flattering complaint of the shortness of time. Bishop Marcianus' building programme moves so fast that Choricius' speech-making cannot keep up.[41] It is true that Mamertinus[42] includes in his speech a narrative of a conversation he says he had with Julian on the day of his inauguration in the consulship for which he is giving thanks. But the conversation is a formal and ceremonial one, and Mamertinus could well have known how it would go before it happened. In any case, a trained orator would not need a long period of warning to produce the kind of speech we see. Rapidity of composition was admired and taught; the example of Isocrates, who spent ten years over his *Panegyricus*, is cited only to be ridiculed.[43]

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[38] Pliny, *Epist.* 2.1.4 *cum uocem praepararet acturus in consulatu principi gratias liber quem forte acceperat grandiorem et seni et stanti ipso pondere elapsus est.* It is not quite clear that this book was the text of his speech: he may have been exercising his voice on any text.

[39] See Cicero, *Pro Plancio* 74: his speech in the Senate after his return from exile was *dicta de scripto,* ('spoken from a written text') because it was so important.

[40] 56.34, 56.42.

[40a] Quintilian (11.3.142) sees holding a book as a hindrance to performance, as well as an admission of lack of confidence.

[41] Choricius, *Or.* 2.28.

[42] *Pan. Lat.* III (XI) 28.

[43] Notably by Plutarch, *Moralia* 350e.

This written, Isocratean style traditionally belonged to the *medium genus*, distinct both from the grand and from the simple.[44] It was marked by amplification, and had little emotional force. 'In the orators', says the writer of *On the sublime* (9.3), 'encomia, ceremonial (πομπικά) and epideictic pieces invariably possess grandeur (ὄγκος) and sublimity, but they are for the most part bereft of emotion; so that the emotional orators are the least encomiastic, and, vice versa, orators of praise (ἐπαινετικοί) are least emotional.' Longinus' concept of sublimity makes emotion a central part of it; but he does not *identify* sublimity with emotion, and he clearly needs to leave a place for the elevated panegyric. There is a problem here for the orator. The passions which other forms of oratory are concerned to arouse—fear, anger, pity—are out of place in panegyric; yet the emotional attitudes of the audience need to be enhanced: admiration, patriotism, gratitude, 'feeling good'. One way of doing this is by encouraging what are really religious sentiments, emphasizing the parallel between the emperor and god, or showing how he can control the elements. Like god, the emperor holds the cosmos together and gives peace: *Corpus Hermeticum* 18 (perhaps late third century) and Libanius *Or.* 59.169–72 are typical developments of this theme. Other methods depend more on style. The 'written' style, with its careful transitions and orderliness, soon becomes monotonous. Variety is needed. 'Dionysius', the author of the περὶ ἐπιδεικτικῶν which best supplements 'Menander', insists on this. His remarks are worth setting out in some detail.[45] In his view, at least, all three *genera dicendi* are needed.

His fullest discussion is at the end of the chapter on the 'panegyric', i.e. the festival speech. 'If my opinion is to prevail', he says, 'I should not advise the diction (λέξιν) to be homogeneous, but varied and mixed, developing some points in a simple manner (ἀφέλεια), others with Isocratean antitheses and *parisoses* (balanced cola), others again in an elevated fashion (διηρμένως). This is the road which I know the leader and chief of our choir [Plato?]

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44 This is the general view, but not universal: Fronto, *Ad M. Caesarem* 3.17 (49 van den Hout) asserts that 'everything in epideictic should be said grandly (ἁδρῶς)', with a sparing use of the 'middle' style and virtually no place for the 'simple' (ἰσχνός).

45 [Dionysius] *Ars rhetorica* 260 (365 Russell and Wilson), 276f. (373 ibid.), 283 (376 ibid.). Plato, especially because of *Menexenus, Phaedrus,* and *Symposium,* seems to be regarded as the exemplar of 'panegyric' style.

almost always takes, unless he has planned to write in a particular genre (εἶδος) ...' The style (ἑρμήνεια) must follow the thought: narrative or mythical parts must be treated simply, what concerns kings or gods grandly (σεμνῶς), and anything involving examples (παραβολαί) or comparisons (συγκρίσεις) in an oratorical manner (πολιτικῶς). More briefly, he makes similar recommendations about the 'address' (προσφωνητικός: 276), which also needs the three different stylistic modes (συνεστραμμένη = πολιτική, i.e. 'periodic', 276.24; διηρμένη, 'elevated', 276.25; ἀφελεστέρα, 'simpler', 276.25), and about the 'funeral speech' (ἐπιτάφιος: 283.16ff.) where the elevated style is explicitly associated with Plato (*Menexenus* is of course in mind).

We can indeed notice stylistic modulations in the speeches we possess, even if we cannot always define them in terms of the 'three styles'.

For example: it is characteristic of the Isocratean manner to put in connecting conjunctions all the time (Longinus 21.1). Asyndeton is a signal of greater excitement, or of special concision. In Libanius' account of the character and habits of Constans (*Or.* 59.144ff.), a change of tone is effected in this way. We have had (137ff.) a vivid and eloquent account of Constans' passage to Britain, rising to considerable heights (Ocean calms his waves to let the emperor pass, § 139), and a periodically constructed passage (§§ 142–3) making the transition from the special praise of a few great actions to general admiration of the emperor's way of life. The narrative becomes a character-sketch. Sentences become shorter, and ultimately the connective conjunctions vanish (§ 147):

ἐν βασιλείοις ἱδρύσθαι νομιζόμενος
  ὁρῶν ὑπερβάλλει κορυφάς,
ὁδοιπορεῖν νομιζόμενος
  ἐν βασιλείοις βουλεύεται.
πλεῖν δοκεῖ θάλατταν,
  ὁ δὲ πεζεύων προσέρχεται.
πεζεύειν δοξάζεται,
  ὁ δὲ γῆν ἀποκρύψας πελάγιος φέρεται.

Thought to be sitting in the palace, he is crossing the mountain-tops. Thought to be on a journey, he is in council in the palace. He is believed to be sailing the sea, but he marches up on foot. He is imagined to be on the march, but he has lost sight of land and is out at sea.

The passage then modulates back into the periodic mode (§ 148):

καὶ ταῦτα μὲν τοιαῦτα καὶ τοσαῦτα διεξέρχεται
οὔτε θεραπείαν εἰς παραμυθίαν τῶν πόνων
οὔτε στρατοπέδου πλῆθος εἰς φυλακὴν ἐπαγόμενος,
ἀλλ' εὐαριθμήτους δή τινας ἐξευρὼν
οὓς ἐπίστευεν ἀκολουθήσειν τῷ τάχει,
τούτοις προειπὼν ἕπεσθαι ᾗ ἂν ἡγῆται
καθάπερ αὐτός τε πτεροφυήσας καὶ τοὺς ἑπομένους πτερώσας
ὀξύτερον νοήματος ἵεται πανταχῆ.

And all these varied activities he pursues without summoning any service to lighten his labours or any great force to protect him, but, having found a handful of men whom he was sure would keep up with his speed, and told them to follow wherever he leads, he darts everywhere quicker than thought, as though he had grown wings himself and given his companions wings also.

Asyndeton can also contribute to the emotive effect of an epilogue, as in Themistius, *Or.* 6.84a:

πάρεστιν ἔχειν ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς
πανήγυριν Χαρίτων,
κεστὸν Ἀφροδίτης,
πέπλον ἐκ γῆς καὶ θαλάττης ἐξυφασμένον,
πανδαισίαν ἑορτῆς,
ἐργαστήριον εὐφροσύνης,
ταμιεῖον εὐδαιμονίας.

We can have in our sight a festival of the Graces, Aphrodite's *kestos*, a robe woven of sea and land, a holiday feast (πανδαισίαν ἑορτῆς), a factory of joy, a storehouse of bliss.

Another kind of effect involving asyndeton is sometimes produced in the Latin panegyrists, in narrative, by adopting the concise style of the Roman historians, with their favourite historic infinitives. Thus Pacatus (§ 36) describes Theodosius' victory at Poetovio in this style:

Armati inermes, integri saucii, primi postremique misceri. Miles urguere eminus cominus, gladiis hastis, punctim caesim ferire. Alii poplitibus imminere, alii terga configere aut quos cursu non poterant continari iaculis occupare. Arma tela, equi homines, uiua perempta, prona supinaque corpora passim uel in aceruo iacere.

Armed unarmed, unhurt wounded, first last, mingled together. Soldiers press on, at long range, at close range, with swords, with spears, they strike with point, with edge. Some threaten knees, some pierce backs, or catch with spears those they could not overtake by speed. Armour weapons, horses men, dead alive, bodies face down and face up, lie spread around or in heaps.

Here too the periodic style soon resumes; the narrative stands out.

All kinds of oratory allow modulations of this kind, but epideictic more than the rest. They are due not only to the need to avoid monotony but to certain positive characteristics of the genre.

For one thing, unlike the forensic and deliberative types, it was, as we have seen, in direct competition with poetry; accordingly, it used poetical vocabulary and ornament freely, and (in our period at least) felt free to quote and allude to poetical passages, especially epic. Its honorands, after all, were heroic.[46]

Secondly, it had a strong affinity with history. It takes research into facts to make a good panegyric: 'In what I say now', says Libanius (*Or.* 59.12b) 'I briefly imitate Thucydides. I have not accepted report without testing it, nor have I avoided the arduous side of investigating the truth in order to rush into what comes first to hand; I have studied the matter painfully and accurately, and I have good reason to be trusted.' On the other hand, encomium does not have to be comprehensive as history does (ibid. 57) or to decide between alternative explanations when either will serve its turn (ibid. 74).

Thirdly, in Latin at least, *historia proxima poetis* ('history is very near poetry', Quint. 10.1.31), and the attempt to describe battles and sieges inevitably leads to poetical colour. There are some panegyrics in both languages—for example, Julian's to Constantius, or the address to Constantius Chlorus in 297 (*Pan. Lat.* VIII (V))—which have a very high proportion of narrative, and therefore of historical style. Description (*ecphrasis*) also is easily introduced and stylistically distinctive. Not only the narrative of wars, but the section on the honorand's native city, give opportunities for this. Often it is conventional: for example the description of Britain in *Pan. Lat.* VI (VII) 9. Sometimes, it is highly literary: Pacatus' excursus on Spain, the home country of Theodosius, which adapts Virgil's *laudes Italiae* with a sort of slavish ingenuity.[47] But

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[46] Homeric parallels could even seem banal: 'I beg to be excused these things, as stale and very old-fashioned' (ὡς ἕωλα παραιτοῦμαι καὶ λίαν ἀρχαῖα), says Themistius (*Or.* 16.205b), passing instead to (almost equally stale) examples from Roman history.

[47] Above p.22. Note especially *Pan. Lat.* II (XII) 4.4f. *adde tot egregias ciuitates, adde culta incultaque omnia uel fructibus plena uel gregibus ... haec durissimos milites, haec experientissimos duces, haec facundissimos oratores, haec clarissimos uates parit, haec iudicum mater, haec principum est* ('add so many splendid cities; add too all the fields, cultivated and fallow, full of crops or herds ... It is she that bears the toughest soldiers, the most experienced generals, the most eloquent orators, the most famous poets; she is the mother of judges, and the mother of

occasionally we get a glimpse of a real landscape: *Pan. Lat.* V (VIII) 6 has a fascinating account of the wine-growing region around Beaune and Nuits. Reality sometimes forces itself in.

§ 8

The variety and therefore the richness of texture of the panegyrics thus depends on associations with many literary genres, indeed with a whole literary culture. It is easiest to see this by taking a single speech and trying to unravel its web of allusions. Themistius' fifteenth *Oration* was addressed to Theodosius I on an accession anniversary in 381. It is by no means a regular *basilikos logos.* In keeping with Themistius' *persona,* which he never drops, it is less rhetorical and more philosophical. It concentrates on the single virtue of justice, and it has no very evident 'Menandrean' structure.

The prologue is highly literary. Homer and Thucydides, we are told, offer models for writing about war, Hesiod for writing about peace. Themistius has a theme 'more peaceful than Homer's, more royal than Hesiod's'. He should be allowed to cull (as usual!) unsullied flowers from the meadows of Plato and Aristotle. He has an appreciative audience. The emperor fulfils Archilochus' definition of one who is both a servant of Ares and skilful in the gifts of the Muses.[48] The audience (it is the Senate at Constantinople) pride themselves on their education as much as on their power.

It is not yet time for war. So let the Muses enter, with their leader Apollo, who is equipped both for war and for peace. The emperor too needs 'the lyre' to harmonize his subjects and prepare them for future contests. Trainers of athletes dominate their charges' lives, not only at the games, but all the time: and the contests they are concerned with are trivial compared to those which confront the ruler of the world. Again, shepherds need not only dogs and spears to protect their flocks against wolves, but healthy pasture and water to support them: and the shepherd of the people has a more demanding task than they. It is justice that he needs to help him manage his people. These comparisons are worked out at great length (185c–7b), and the Homeric and Platonic overtones of the shepherd analogy are clearly in view.

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emperors').

[48] Archilochus (fr.1 West) is not named.

Homer then comes to the front (187b). Despite his predilection for war, he is fully aware of the king's need for justice. When he describes Agamemnon as 'good king and powerful spearman' (*Iliad* 7.281), he is distinguishing the soldier from the king. A king *need* not be a skilful man-at-arms, but of course it helps if he is, as Theodosius and Gratian (ὁ σὸς ἀρχηγέτης) are. It is an extra qualification, as it were (ἐν περιουσίᾳ, 187d). That Homer saw something special in kingship is shown by the fact that when he speaks of a king he often uses adjectives suggesting divinity, and relationship with Zeus: he is reared by Zeus or born of him, or equal to him in counsel: διοτρεφής, διογενής, Διὶ μῆτιν ἀτάλαντος. It is the king's business to become like Zeus, whose servant and steward he is. We recall that this is all said by a pagan scholar to a Christian emperor: the pagan associations seem to be insignificant. In what does this likeness to God consist? Theodosius (like Telemachus in *Odyssey* 1.301) is indeed 'fair and strong'; but it is not beauty or strength but the inner likeness to God, the likeness in the soul, that makes the king. Let us ask Homer how a human being can achieve this. His answer is to be found in well-known and often quoted lines of the *Odyssey* (19.109ff.): the godlike king maintains justice, and under his rule the earth is fruitful, the flocks bear healthy young, the sea gives fish bountifully, and the people prosper. Plato too knew what Homer thought about this; and his praise of justice is based upon it. Let us then hold fast to justice, and not let her once again leave earth for heaven.[49] It is the emperor's own quality that will ensure this.

Themistius then goes on (190b) to praise Theodosius for his mercy to former enemies, comparing Alexander's mercy to Porus, Artaxerxes' to Themistocles, and the Romans' to Masinissa (ib. *Or.* 7.94d). Enemies who disdain force yield to goodness. Piety and humanity (εὐσέβεια καὶ φιλανθρωπία) are more powerful even than wise counsel: witness Marcus Aurelius' prayer for rain in the war with the Marcomanni,[50] so famously fulfilled. But the reverse is also true. Why did the Greek army suffer from the plague in the first book of the *Iliad*? Because Homer wishes to teach us that the offences of private men affect none but themselves, while the follies of rulers are paid for by their subjects.

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49 Themistius is thinking both of Aratus' *Phaenomena* 127ff., and of Aidos and Nemesis in Hesiod (*Works and Days* 199).

50 See Cassius Dio 72.8.

To praise the emperor is also to praise the court (192a); they reflect the emperor, as the emperor reflects god. The theme is developed mainly (and characteristically of the genre) by comparisons. Theodosius excels Titus, who thought any day passed without doing good a 'non-royal' day.[51] He excels Alexander, because this victory is his own doing, and owes nothing to his companions. These are the steps to heaven: it is not piling Ossa on Olympus that brings a man to these heights, but the steps he takes by doing good to mankind. Theodosius is more like a god than Lycurgus, despite what the Delphic oracle said of the Spartan lawgiver, because the cities he controls are far more populous than Sparta. He deserves divine titles—Saviour, Guardian of Cities, of Strangers, of Suppliants (σωτήρ, πολιεύς, ξένιος, ἱκέσιος)—which indicate his goodness, not only titles like Germanicus and Sarmaticus, which can only be earned in the company of Terror and War ('Ενυώ), powers which dwell on earth because of human wickedness, and have no place in heaven. For in heaven none of Homer's powers of war (Δεῖμος, 'Ενυώ, Κυδοῖμος, Κῆρες) can dwell, nor is there to be found there a jar of 'good things and evil things' (*Iliad* 24.527) but only good; and this is true of the empire also, for there is no 'jar' of tears and groans or terror or bloodshed in the councils of an emperor who has distributed blessings to all ever since he succeeded to the throne. The jar of evil is buried and rusty, its lid firmly on. It is not that hope alone is shut in;[52] on the contrary, all the evils are safely imprisoned, only hope has flown out, and all things are full of good hope. It is an age of happiness and security for all. Theodosius and Gratian (195a) jointly guide the ship of state in stormy seas, where 'Eurus and Notus and foul Zephyrus blow' (*Odyssey* 5.295), and 'it is not any man who can sail to Corinth' but only the most skilful and vigilant pilot.[53] The metaphors of the 'ship of state' and the 'chariot of state' are variously amplified in a long passage, which concludes (197a–c)

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[51] ἀβασίλευτος ἡμέρα: so in *Or.* 6.80b, 8.107a, 13.175e. This version is more pointed than the one familiar from Suetonius, *Titus* 8 *hodie diem perdidi* ('today I have lost a day').

[52] Here (194c) Themistius shifts from Homer' jar to Pandora's jar in Hesiod (*Works and Days* 94–104): another instance of his habit of conflating literary memories (cf. n.49).

[53] This is another unexpected use of a traditional allusion. The usual interpretation of this passage (e.g. Zenobius 5.37) is that Corinth is full of expensive brothels, and only the rich can enjoy them.

with an appeal to the emperors to restore Roman rule in east and west and bring back the discipline that will give victory.

Like the *prooemium*, the epilogue (197e–9b) is full of quotation and allusion. It is based on the story of Tyrtaeus, the (allegedly) Athenian poet whom the Athenians gave to Sparta as an ally and who, as a morale-booster, was worth a whole army.[54] Tyrtaeus can rouse men to valour: philosophy can do it even better (198a). In all his experience, Themistius concludes, he has found no better emperors than Theodosius and Gratian, united in heart and purpose, and soon to be accompanied by the third horse of the team (Arcadius or Valentinian). Now is the time to remove any blots on the imperial record that remain. Tyrtaeus, Homer[55] and philosophy all give the password you must give to your men: let them sharpen their swords, and their courage (θυμός), set their shields aright, and even more their valour (εὐψυχία); by this means 'you will drive hence the accursed days that evil spirits bear' (*Iliad* 8.527)—not 'to the ships', as in Homer, but 'to the Danube', 'so that in time to come men may shudder at doing wrong to a host who has given them friendship'.[56]

The speech thus ends on a warlike note, taking up and in a sense correcting the allusion to a forthcoming campaign at the beginning (185b). The allusions to Tyrtaeus and Homer at the end balance those to Homer, Hesiod and Archilochus in the *prooemium*, and we are left with a strong impression of the speaker's literary culture.

Themistius was (as he never ceases to remind us) a philosopher and a long-practised and professional adviser of emperors. He sees himself (e.g. *Or.* 5.63d) in the tradition of Augustus' adviser Arius, of Thrasyllus under Tiberius, Dio under Trajan, or Epictetus with the Antonines. The contribution of high culture in his panegyrics is greater than in most others; but it is only a special case of something essential to the genre. High culture—poetry, rhetoric, history, on occasion philosophy—is the panegyrists' main contribution to the glory of the emperor. It sets him in a heroic and historical context. It offers a memorial which, in virtue of its archaic and supposedly timeless language, promises immortality.

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[54] For the story see especially Plato, *Laws* 629a–30b, which would of course have been familiar to Themistius.

[55] He cites *Iliad* 13.99, 2.344, 2.382.

[56] This is Homer again: *Iliad* 3.353.

A momentary ceremony is commemorated in a medium 'more lasting than bronze'. It is of course the tribute of a minority, but a minority which believed—and no doubt so persuaded the men of war and power—that it held the key to the judgement of posterity.

When we read these elaborate mosaics of allusion, we wonder how far they were understood by their immediate audience. We should also wonder whether it mattered. There is a story about Dio Chrysostom[57] according to which Trajan said to him 'I do not know what you are saying, but I love you as myself.' Themistius' speeches to Valens make it clear that the emperor did not really follow in detail what was said. In *Oration* 8 (28 March 368), Themistius tries (as often) to attach the Platonic ideal of the good king to the emperor of the moment. The last of the qualities desired is capacity for learning (τὸ εὐμαθές): 'Look first at this last feature: see how in this young man there shines the love of learning (τὸ φιλομαθές)—and, if you prefer it, the capacity (εὐμαθές). He does not share the language of my speech, but one can see he is more eager to encounter it than the real Athenians ... He is roused by literature as much as by the trumpet; nor do the unfamiliar and unaccustomed words put him out, but he seeks out the underlying sense and, if he is given a little hint, needs no interpreter.' Valens reacts by smiling, frowning and trying to understand the technique of the speaker. The *prooemium* to a later speech (*Or.* 10, early 370) makes the same point, but more flatteringly (129c): Valens, surprisingly, prefers Themistius' Greek to the Latin of others, because he does not hang on the words, but seeks the underlying sense; he prefers orderly thought to fair words, philosophy to rhetoric. The panegyrist has indeed made the best of a bad job.

§ 9

Latin panegyrists too wrote in a high style, demanding a good deal of their audience. They had their classical models: Cicero's *Pro Marcello*, and parts of *Verrines* and *Philippics* had much influence. Quotations and allusions out of Virgil and Ennius are common (especially in Pacatus, *Pan. Lat.* II (XII)). They correspond to the Greek taste for Homer. The collectors of the fourth-century

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57 Philostratus, *Lives of the Sophists* 1.7.

panegyrici placed at the head of the collection the elaborate *gratiarum actio* of the younger Pliny, delivered in Sept. 100, and much enlarged for subsequent public reading (*recitatio*) and publication. It remains the only specimen of this genre we have before the fourth century. There must have been many. Fronto[58] remarks that he *often* praised Hadrian in the senate, though he had no strong personal feeling for him, and that he postponed his *gratiarum actio* to Antoninus in order to have it published and not 'remain hidden in the *acta senatus*'. It is lost; but seems to have been known to the later panegyrists.[59] Pliny's speech[60] is not much like a 'Menandrean' *basilikos*, though it does of course have many common epideictic features: Trajan's warlike achievements (12–19) precede his political ones (25–53), and some of his legislative acts (46–55) are seen to reflect his personal views.

This rather loose relationship to the 'Menandrean' pattern is characteristic also of the fourth-century Latin *panegyrici*. There was no slavish reproduction of a model, however conventional the language and the material might be.

The anonymous address to Constantius Chlorus on an accession anniversary, probably at Trier in 297, is a good example (*Pan. Lat.* VIII (V)). The exordium (1–2) dwells, according to rule, on the greatness of the subject and the trepidation of the speaker. It also explains his position: he is elderly, has been a teacher of rhetoric and an imperial official. Having once upon a time made his début with a speech in honour of Maximian, he has come out of retirement to perform this service for Constantius. Thus, like Themistius, he uses his experience and his educational standing to give authority to his words. He proceeds (2) to define his theme. A *praeteritio* ('passing over') is sufficient reminder of the brilliant deeds of Constantius in the past. We recall the day of his original elevation, now to be commemorated once again. It was a brilliant first of March. Springtime (3) signifies the birth not only of new life but of the renewed empire of the Caesars. This is, in a sense, a birthday topic: the point Menander (412 Spengel) made about using the qualities of the season in birthday commemorations is easily adapted to an anniversary. The style rises accordingly:

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58 *Ad M. Caesarem* 2.4. (25 van den Hout).

59 See *Pan. Lat.* VIII (V) 14.2.

60 For an analysis see, besides editions, Gamberini 1983, 379ff.

O felix beatumque uer nouo partu,
iam non amoenitate florum
nec uiriditate segetum
nec gemmis uitium
nec ipsis tantum fauoniis
et luce reserata
laetum atque uenerabile
quantum ortu Caesarum maximorum!

O happy, blessed Spring, for your new birth, joyful and venerable not so much now for the delight of your flowers, the verdure of your crops, the buds of your vines or even the west winds and the opening light, as for the rise of our mighty Caesars!

We are thus prepared for a passage of unusual elevation. The four rulers of the Tetrarchy correspond to the four elements, the four parts of the world, the four seasons, the four complete years of the *lustrum*, the four horses of the Sun, and the quartet of heavenly lights: Sun, Moon, Vesper and Lucifer. Whatever this symbolism means[61] the literary function of these cosmic parallels is obvious: they equate the empire with the world, the emperors with its guiding powers. Indeed, the Tetrarchs spread light over the world even more steadily and perpetually than the Sun himself. And here the speaker breaks off: neither today, nor tomorrow, nor all the days to come would suffice for a full enumeration of the blessings of the empire. 'Moreover', he adds, 'we must take account of time, as Caesar is standing while we speak' (*habenda ratio est temporis, Caesare stante dum loquimur*). Was he really? It is an unexpected light on the ceremony. But the point seems to be not that Caesar is uncomfortable or being forced to stand while others sit, but that the ceremony detains him from going about the business of the empire and displaying his prowess in action. *Stante* is pregnant: it means that he is at rest, not in action; it is as though the sun has stopped in his course, and the business of the world is halted.

A further *praeteritio* (5) dismisses eastern and African campaigns. We turn to Gaul, which Constantius has made secure. The whole central part of the speech (6–16) is devoted to campaigns and victories in the West, with a great deal of description and vivid narrative. First comes the recovery of Boulogne, and Caesar's triumph over the Ocean tides (of which we are given a grandiose scientific explanation). It is a triumph which puts Xerxes' foolish

[61] See MacCormack 172.

fettering of the Hellespont into the shade. Next is the suppression of rebellion in the marshes of the Scheldt; this is also an opportunity for expansion, here an elaborate geographical *ecphrasis* of the boggy terrain (8). The conquered barbarians provide slave labour for the province; former brigands bring their cattle to market, and barbarian labour brings down the price of corn: *cultor barbarus laxat annonam* (9). This is a striking picture. It is also convention, since Menander (377.17 Spengel) makes the provision of prisoners as slaves one of the blessings of victory for which one should give thanks. In Menander, it is an epilogue topic: and it recurs in our speech, at the very end. But here it is only a step on the way to the main subject, the reduction of Britain, the greatest achievement of this 'invincible' Caesar. *Caesar inuicte*: the vocative comes first in the first sentence of the speech; it is taken up eleven times in the sequel.[62]

To throw the achievement into relief, something must now be said about past disasters, the loss of so much territory throughout the empire in the time of Gallienus. But it must be said with care. The state, says our speaker, was dismembered *siue incuria rerum siue quadam inclinatione fatorum* (10.2): perhaps it was neglect; perhaps it was inevitable. He is careful not to point too sharp a contrast, or assign blame too clearly, for that would be bad craftsmanship (ἄτεχνον), as we remember from Menander,[63] and not conducive to the task in hand.

We come at last to Britain. It is a world in itself. Julius Caesar claimed to have found a new world when he crossed the Channel. But his achievement was less than Constantius'. In those days, the Roman fleet was trained in war, and the British adversaries were half-naked savages. The present crisis is very different: the enemy has a fleet and legionary troops, our men are new to naval warfare. These circumstances are set out (12.1) in a long set of ablative absolutes. The following narrative appears quite detailed; but it in fact glosses over the part played in the defeat of Allectus by the praetorian prefect, Asclepiodotus, in order, doubtless, to magnify Constantius' personal achievement. The mere sight of Constantius' sails on the horizon makes Allectus abandon his fleet (15.5). Nature too favours him: a fog in the Channel enables his fleet to slip past the enemy off the Isle of Wight (15.1). The final battle in

62 At 2.2, 7.3, 9.6, 13.4, 14.3, 15.5, 17.1, 17.3, 17.4, 21.1, 21.3.
63 377.1 Spengel.

Hampshire and the rescue of London from pillage at the hands of Allectus' Frankish mercenaries are drawn in bright and bloody colours. The potential threat of a maritime, piratical power is no doubt exaggerated; but the story of the Franks whom Probus had settled on the Black Sea and who made their own piratical way home, sacking Syracuse *en route*, lends colour to the appraisal. This story is carefully introduced to support the speaker's interpretation of events: it is a good example of a forensic or deliberative technique, aimed to persuade a sceptical audience, used in an epideictic context.

It is victory (19) that brings out Constantius' other virtues. He is welcomed as a deliverer sent from heaven. His clemency and *pietas* are already known from report; his *grauitas*, his *lenitas*, his modesty, his justice, are apparent in his looks and words. The peroration (20f.) prays for continued peace,[64] and links the recovery of Britain with the achievements of the other Tetrarchs. At the very end, the speaker returns to his own city of Autun: she too has profited by the importation from Britain of skilled workmen who help to restore her ravaged public buildings.

This is a skilful and varied speech. It illustrates very well the ways in which conventional themes could be selected, arranged, and embellished by an orator who had his mind on the special circumstances which confronted him, and knew how to gloss the facts appropriately.

§ 10

In conclusion, I state briefly what seem to be the main points to remember.

(1) 'Epideictic' is an old tradition: unlike other forms of rhetoric, it is a prose substitute for poetry, which indeed continued as its rival to the end (Claudian, Corippus).

(2) 'Menander' and 'Dionysius' are our main source of knowledge for the teaching. They both adapt ancient principles of encomium (biographical sequence, classification by 'virtues') to specific occasions of contemporary relevance. But their range is limited: the occasions they treat are as often as not private rather than

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[64] Again, a Menandrean point: 378.28 Spengel.

public, and they have hardly anything to say about anniversaries, consulships, and, in general, court occasions. These presumably developed under Diocletian and his successors.

(3) Specifically epideictic teaching was never a major part of the main rhetorical curriculum, because it had not been an important genre in classical times. It was, on the other hand, a regular part of courses in 'preliminary exercises' (*progymnasmata*), and in this context it included historical, imaginary and paradoxical themes—things not at all close to the problems of 'panegyric' in real life.

(4) Imperial panegyrics are thus, from the point of view of rhetorical classification, a species of a wider genre. They are public and therefore political. They aim to confer immortality on an important ceremonial moment. Their claim to do this rests on the value assigned to the high culture which they represent: classical language, allusions to poetry, comparisons with history and myth which set the honorand in a world-wide context, sometimes also an appeal to philosophical morality or views of the world (as especially in Themistius).

(5) Small-scale rhetorical techniques, not specific to epideictic, are at least as important as Menandrean schemata for understanding what the panegyrists do. These include the routine handling of argument, imagery, examples, topics of *prooemia* and epilogues, and above all choice of words and rhythm. The traditional 'writing style' of early epideictic risked being monotonous; the risk could be avoided by introducing *prosopopoeiae*, modulating into other styles, and drawing on the resources of the historical and poetical classics. Without skill in all these things, the enduring monument could not be raised. The surviving speeches have accomplished their task: it is no coincidence that, as we said at the beginning, they are almost all by writers of note.

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THE ROMAN BACKGROUND

CHAPTER TWO

PRAISE AND PROTREPTIC IN EARLY IMPERIAL PANEGYRIC: CICERO, SENECA, PLINY

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> No other way of correcting a prince is so efficacious as presenting, in the guise of flattery, the pattern of a really good prince. Thus do you instil virtues and remove faults in such a manner that you seem to urge the prince to the former and restrain him from the latter.
>
> (Erasmus *Ep.* 179.42–5)

Prose panegyric: origins

Unlike most genres of classical literature, prose panegyric appears to have an originary moment. Isocrates claims that his *Evagoras* (365 BC) is innovative (5–11) in that it offers an encomium in prose of a man of contemporary times (5). 'I realise that what I intend to do is difficult—to eulogize a man's virtues in prose ... No one has ever attempted to write on such a theme' (8). The central difficulty is that the resources of poetry are not available to him (8–11).[1] Despite these (alleged) obstacles, the speech that he produced was taken as a model by later writers of panegyric and clearly played a significant part in establishing the 'rules' of the genre. But can we accept his claim of innovation? Such claims of primacy occur throughout classical literature. For example, both Lucretius and Virgil use the imagery of treading untrodden mountain paths,[2] yet it seems clear that Lucretius' poem is breaking new ground in a

[1] Cf. Russell in this volume, p.24.

[2] Lucr. 1.922–30 e.g. *auia Pieridum peragro loca nullius ante | trita solo* ('I traverse the pathless places of the Pierides, not yet trodden by any foot'); Virg. *G.* 3.291–3 e.g. *iuuat ire iugis qua nulla priorum | Castaliam molli deuertitur orbita cliuo* ('I delight in walking on the heights where no forerunner's track turns down to Castalia on a gentle slope').

way in which Virgil is not in his *Georgics*, a poem which is heavily indebted to Lucretius in both language and ideas. Claims of innovation and primacy are designed to prepare the audience for something daring and unexpected and to protect the author against the risk of failure. By announcing the novelty and audacity of the undertaking, the author raises the audience's expectations and promises an experience deserving of attention.

It is just possible that before Isocrates no one had produced such a panegyric in prose. Yet there are clear congeners. *Evagoras* seems to combine the hymning of the (very much alive) victorious athlete in poetry such as Pindar's with the collective and anonymous Athenian funeral oration, such as Pericles' *epitaphios logos*, represented by Thucydides (2.35–46).[3] Like Pindar in his epinician hymns, Isocrates praises an individual; as in the funeral oration, his subject is dead. His subject is Evagoras, king of Salamis in Cyprus, and this may constitute the innovation: whereas in democratic Athens no individual receives the spotlight of attention, in a monarchical context, Isocrates is free to elevate one individual above the rest. The speech is addressed to his son and heir, Nicocles, who is described in the opening sentence as honouring his father's tomb with offerings and activities which suggest a commemorative festival (1, cf. 73–7), possibly several years after Evagoras' death in 374 BC. The originality of Isocrates' composition may be the fusion of these two traditions.

Isocrates' oration was clearly immediately influential. Its effect can be seen in Xenophon's *Agesilaus*, an encomium on the king of Sparta (398–*c*.361/60 BC) written soon after his death and explicitly described as an ἐγκώμιον, not a funeral dirge (θρῆνον) (10.3), and more generally in the *logoi epitaphioi* incorporated into historiography,[4] in Velleius' miniature panegyric of Tiberius in his history[5] and ultimately in Tacitus' *Agricola*.[6]

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[3] The hallmark of the Athenian funeral oration was collective civic celebration: see N. Loraux, *The Invention of Athens: The funeral oration in the classical city* (tr. A. Sheridan, Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1986) 1–76, esp. 1–3 and 42–3 (contrast with the individualistic Roman funeral oration). For other, literary, encomia see Russell in this volume, p.18f.

[4] Seneca the Elder mentions Sallust's penchant for incorporating *epitaphia* (obituaries) into his works and preserves a number of obituaries of Cicero at *Suas.* 6.21–7.

[5] Velleius 126: see A.J. Woodman, *Velleius Paterculus. The Tiberian narrative (2.94–131)* (Cambridge, 1977) 234–5 for discussion of this miniature panegyric.

[6] Quintilian's prescriptions for panegyric (*laus hominum*) envisage as

Roman prose panegyric

It might be expected that Roman prose panegyric emerged from the highly developed tradition of funeral orations, significantly different from the Athenian practice, in that funerals were occasions for panegyric of individuals. Similarly, Roman gravestones bore encomia of the dead. But these orations and epitaphs do not constitute or even belong to the genre of Latin panegyric. The chief differentiation is that Latin panegyric takes as its subject someone living. Moreover, it is characteristically rooted in highly specific socio-political occasions. These characteristics will emerge from the classic case of Pliny's *Panegyric*, Pliny's expanded version of the vote of thanks (*gratiarum actio*) delivered to the emperor Trajan in the Senate on 1 September AD 100, which heads the collection of the twelve *Latin Panegyrics* and indeed served as a model for the later speeches.[7]

In what follows, I shall refrain from generalizations about Latin panegyric of the early period, chiefly because every panegyric makes its own adaptation of the Greek framework to its specific context, often a context of inauguration. I shall use that context to illuminate Pliny's mammoth oration and the Caesarian speeches of Cicero which I shall style proto-panegyrics. The marked protreptic element in these works will lead to a consideration of Seneca's treatise to the young emperor Nero, *On Clemency*, modelled on Hellenistic kingship treatises, another inaugurative text with similar concerns and material. The resulting illumination of the practices of early imperial Latin panegyric as instantiated in Cicero, Seneca and Pliny will respect the very significant differences of each panegyrist's situation and relationship with his subject.[8]

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models of organization the chronological account of a man's life and deeds and sections on the different virtues with deeds included under these headings (3.7.10–18, esp.15).

[7] For an overview of Pliny's *Panegyric*, which we should properly refer to as his *gratiarum actio* (*Pan.* 1.6, 90.3), see Radice 1968; Fedeli 1989.

[8] For a brief general overview of Latin panegyric, prose and verse, see L.K. Born, 'The Perfect Prince according to the Latin Panegyrists', *AJP* 55 (1934) 20–35, supplemented by K.M. Coleman, *Statius Silvae IV* (Oxford, 1988) 62–5 (introduction to *Silv.* 4.1). M. Mause, *Die Darstellung des Kaisers in der lateinischen Panegyrik* (Palingenesia 50, Stuttgart, 1994) is a comprehensive compilation of prose and verse panegyric in Latin. On the sources of particular ideas and phrases in Pliny's *Panegyric* see the detailed compilation of J. Mesk, 'Zur Quellenanalyse des plinianischen Panegyric', *WS* 33 (1911) 71–100, followed broadly by Durry 1938, 27–33, including Isocrates, *Evagoras*, Xenophon, *Agesi-*

Panegyric and virtues according to Isocrates and Menander Rhetor

First, I shall briefly consider the panegyrical framework established by Isocrates' exemplar and the theoretical prescriptions of Menander Rhetor for the *basilikos logos.* Isocrates starts with Evagoras' illustrious descent (13–18), then moves to his birth (19–21). His description of Evagoras' youth indicates that he was destined for greatness (22) and the catalogue of his adult qualities confirms this (23: 'courage, wisdom, justice', ἀνδρία, σοφία, δικαιοσύνη). As proof of his greatness Isocrates describes how Evagoras seized Salamis from the usurper with a band of only fifty followers (28–32) and compares him with a great man from the past, Cyrus (33–9). He proceeds to depict Evagoras' characteristic virtues as king: energy, impartiality, humanity, fairness, consistency, self-sacrifice (40–6). After details about Evagoras' Hellenization of Salamis and the political and military consequences of that Hellenization, especially the assistance he gave to Conon of Athens (47–57), he asserts that Evagoras surpasses the heroes who waged war on Troy: 'they, accompanied by all Greece, captured only Troy while Evagoras, with only one city, made war on all Asia' (65). He finally claims that Evagoras deserves immortality as much as anyone (70–2) and concludes by offering his depiction of Evagoras as a model for future emulation, in particular by Evagoras' son, Nicocles (73–7). He exhorts Nicocles to prove himself worthy of his father and encourages him by suggesting that to do so he only has to maintain his present conduct (78–81). We find a remarkable similarity in the prescriptions for the 'Imperial Oration' or, better, 'King Speech', the *basilikos logos,* in the school handbook attributed to Menander Rhetor and probably written in the late third century AD.[9] Significantly, the treatise starts by recommending that the

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laus, Cicero, Velleius, Seneca, *De clementia* and Tacitus, *Agricola.* On Velleius' miniature panegyric for Tiberius see E.S. Ramage, 'Velleius Paterculus 2.126.2-3 and the Panegyric Tradition', *Cl. Ant.* 1 (1982) 266–71. For the connection between Cicero, Seneca and Pliny see Syme 1958, 95. On the later panegyrists' development see MacCormack 1975. On their inventiveness and ingenuity see R. Seager, 'Some Imperial Virtues in the Latin Prose Panegyrics', *Papers of the Liverpool Latin Seminar 4th volume 1983,* ed. F. Cairns (Liverpool, 1984) 129–65.

[9] Durry 1938, 27 n.2 rightly mentions other theoreticians too, including Aphthonius and Theon, and rhetoricians, including Pliny's contemporary Dio Chrysostom and Aelius Aristides, whose orations on kingship continue the tradition of the Hellenistic kingship treatises. On Menander Rhetor see

orator assert his inability to tackle the theme by claiming to be at a loss where to start or how to do justice to his subject: elements which feature prominently at the start and close of Isocrates' oration.

A central feature of Isocrates' speech is his praise of Evagoras' 'virtues'. This feature reappears in Menander Rhetor's prescription in a more codified catalogue of the four classic virtues of a ruler, derived ultimately from Plato: courage, justice, temperance and wisdom (ἀνδρεία, δικαιοσύνη, σωφροσύνη, φρόνησις (elsewhere σοφία), Men. Rhet. 373). It seems that during the Hellenistic period a canon or, better, pool of virtues of the ruler developed, described in what we can call 'kingship treatises',[10] which was in turn adopted by the Romans (*fortitudo, temperantia/ continentia, iustitia* and *prudentia/ sapientia* are Cicero's terms) and adapted to Roman ideology.[11] An eloquent example is the Golden Shield (*Clupeus Virtutis*) presented to Augustus in 27 BC by the SPQR which proclaimed his 'courage, clemency, justice and piety' (*uirtus, clementia, iustitia* and *pietas*: *Achievements* 34.2), a significant variation on the classic quartet of virtues.[12] The pool of virtues provided an instant template against which any ruler, including an emperor, could readily be measured. But of course, different rulers had different strengths and preferred to emphasize some virtues and to play down others.[13]

Russell in this volume, pp.29–33, and for translation and commentary on the *basilikos logos* see Russell and Wilson, with summary 271.

[10] See E.R. Goodenough, 'The Political Philosophy of Hellenistic Kingship', *YCS* 1 (1928) 58–102. The central texts are the pseudo-Pythagorean tracts preserved by Stobaeus, which may date from the third century BC or from considerably later. See L. Delatte, *Les Traités de la royauté d'Ecphante, Diotogène et Sthenidas* (Liège, 1942). Plutarch draws heavily on Hellenistic writings in his discussions of kings and kingship.

[11] On the Platonic–Stoic 'fundamental canon' see H.F. North, 'Canons and Hierarchies of the Cardinal Virtues in Greek and Latin Literature' in *The Classical Tradition (Studies in Honor of A. Caplan)*, ed. L. Wallach (1966) 165–83 at 166–7; on Hellenistic canons of virtue ibid. 174–5. On the problems associated with 'canons' see Wallace-Hadrill 1981, 300–7. On Hellenistic 'kingship treatises' cf. T. Adam, *Clementia Principis. Der Einfluss hellenistischer Fürstenspiegel auf den Versuch einer rechtlichen Fundierung des Principats durch Seneca* (Stuttgart, 1970).

[12] See I.S. Ryberg, 'Clupeus Virtutis' in *The Classical Tradition (Studies in Honor of A. Caplan)*, ed. L. Wallach (1966) 232–8: 'not the orthodox Greek list of wisdom, justice, fortitude, and moderation' (234). Wallace-Hadrill, while conceding that Augustus' Golden Shield may be a variation on the Hellenistic philosophical canon of virtues, prefers to set it in the tradition of Hellenistic honorific presentations to kings and other benefactors (1981, 300–7).

[13] The classic discussion is M.P. Charlesworth, 'The Virtues of a Roman

This emerges through the different media of self-representation available to emperors, which include celebration by poets and imagery offered in cult contexts, in inscriptions and particularly in the minting of coins. Coins readily carried a single word and image—and that image could readily be the personification of an imperial virtue, such as *pietas*, *iustitia*, *liberalitas* or *clementia*.[14] This focus upon specific virtues selected from the pool will emerge as an important feature in the early imperial panegyrical texts under scrutiny here.

Pliny on Trajan's virtues

Pliny in his *Panegyric* reproduces all the standard topics and adopts the standard chronological sequence, although he plays down aspects of Trajan's origin and early years, presumably because Trajan's adoption by Nerva complicates the situation. The bulk of the speech is Pliny's celebration of Trajan's virtues as emperor, which have an impressively wide range, given that he had only been emperor for two years and had spent only half of that time in Rome, which reduces the material available (although Pliny claims, of course, that this is no impediment: 56.2). Pliny closes with intimations of Trajan's divinity and with invitations to his adoptive father and his natural father (the only place Trajan senior is actually named in the speech) to take pleasure in their son's success (89). Finally he addresses a classic prayer to the gods and especially to Capitoline Jupiter for the emperor's preservation (*salus principis*, 94.1–2). Against the background of the conventions of panegyric and the pool of imperial virtues, it emerges that Pliny makes significant adaptations to accommodate and articulate (his view of) Trajan's uniqueness. Particularly important are the comparisons with Trajan's predecessors embedded throughout the speech, above all the contrast with Domitian. This is a salutary

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Emperor: Propaganda and the creation of belief', *PBA* 23 (1937) 105–38. See now Wallace-Hadrill 1981 and J.R. Fears, 'The cult of Virtue and Roman Imperial Ideology', *ANRW* II 17.2 (1981) 827–948.

[14] On virtues on imperial coinage see Wallace-Hadrill 1981, esp. the Appendix with a chart of the personifications which appear on Roman coinage (319–23); of these thirty-six personifications he defines twelve as virtues (309–10).

reminder that panegyrics are rooted in specific contexts, a point to which I shall return later.[15]

At the beginning of the speech, Pliny faces a potential difficulty over Trajan's origin, as the prescriptions of Menander Rhetor warn may happen. He refrains from naming Trajan's natural father, M. Ulpius Traianus, and Trajan's Spanish birthplace (Italica, in Baetica).[16] Instead, he asserts that Trajan is an emperor created by the gods (5.1–2) and he celebrates his adoption by Nerva, complimenting Nerva on the wisdom of his choice and Trajan on the qualities that merited that choice (6–8). That is, he turns a potential difficulty to his rhetorical advantage by portraying Trajan's *electio* as meeting unanimous approval (7.5–6).[17] He then dwells upon the deification of Nerva (11) which, of course, renders Trajan 'the son of the god', *diui filius* (although Pliny does not use the phrase). That is, the relationship between Nerva and Trajan and in particular the deification of Nerva takes the place of the usual praise of the subject's origins by neatly asserting superhuman status right at the start.[18] This is underlined by the fact that Pliny nowhere uses the name *Traianus*, which could act as a reminder of his human origins, except at the very close (88.6).

After this, Pliny proceeds in a more conventional fashion by describing Trajan's early years (14.1). He alludes to early military successes Trajan achieved with his father (14.1) and to later exploits under Domitian. He claims that Trajan had ten years' experience as military tribune (15.3: probably an exaggeration), which is designed as proof of his expertise. By picturing a future triumph Pliny moves closer to the time of Trajan's accession and return to Rome while maintaining the military emphasis.

Pliny has so far neatly combined the requirement to describe the subject's early years with a celebration of one of the chief qualities of a ruler: his military courage and excellence (*uirtus*). He has also incorporated many of the other classic, conventional virtues

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[15] As MacCormack (1975) argues for the later Latin panegyrics.

[16] The mention of Trajan's descent from a father who was a patrician, a consular and awarded a triumph (9.2) is deeply embedded in a discussion of Nerva's adoption of Trajan.

[17] On Trajan's suitability for power see M. Hammond, 'Pliny the Younger's Views on Government', *HSCP* 49 (1938) 115–40 at 122 & 139 and Syme 1958, 58.

[18] For the analogy with Tiberius' adoption by Augustus see Ramage (n.8).

into these opening sections.[19] Trajan is praised for his 'devotion to duty, self-restraint and sense of pity' (*pietatem abstinentiam mansuetudinem,* 2.6), his 'humanity, self-control and accessibility' (*humanitatem temperantiam facilitatem,* 2.7) and his 'modesty and moderation' (*modestiam ... moderationemque,* 3.2). By presenting himself pondering the qualities needed in the Roman emperor, Pliny compliments Trajan as exceeding his highest ideal (4.4). He alone, claims Pliny, has virtues unsullied by faults (4.5). He proceeds to celebrate Trajan's qualities: 'How wonderful! His sternness (*seueritas*) is not at all diminished by his sense of humour (*hilaritas*) or his authority (*grauitas*) by his openness (*simplicitas*) or his grandeur (*maiestas*) by his sense of humanity (*humanitas*). What is more, his robustness and height, his fine head and noble face and the unbent strength of his maturity along with his hair adorned with the early signs of old age, the gift of the gods designed to enhance his grandeur,—are these not the marks, far and wide, of our ruler?' (4.6–7).

Pliny records Trajan's rapturous reception in Rome early in AD 99 on his first arrival there since becoming emperor (his *aduentus*) and proceeds to work through his actions and achievements in broadly chronological sequence from that point, using his behaviour to demonstrate his virtues. Standard items from the pool are named throughout: his seriousness, moral excellence and self-control (*grauitate sanctitate temperantia,* 82.8), his generosity (*benignitas,* 25.3, 39.3, 60.7; *munificentia,* 25.5; *liberalitas,* 25.5, 27.3, 33.2, 38.2), his freedom from guilt (*innocentia,* 49.3) and his consequent freedom from fear (*securitas,* 68.4). 'Justice' (*iustitia*) is a canonical virtue. Pliny highlights Trajan's *iustitia* in his restoration of the rule of law to the treasury (36.1–3); and his *iustitia* is first mentioned in the form of the fairness he demonstrates in his management of a show (33.2). In court he exhibits 'how strictness (*seueritas*) need not be cruel and how mercy (*clementia*) need not be weak' (80.1). He is also credited with mercy (*clementia*) for the way he entrusts the punishment of informers to the gods (35.1) and with pity (*mansuetudo*) for his alleviations of bereavement (38.5).

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[19] Wallace-Hadrill finds twenty in sections 2–4 and a further fifteen in the rest of the speech (1981, 312 n.67).

Trajan's uniqueness

In all this, there is nothing startling. But there is one specific cluster of qualities which recurs throughout the oration and which seems to be singled out as characteristic of Trajan. Pliny goes out of his way from the beginning to emphasize that Trajan is and indeed considers himself 'one of us' (*unum ille se ex nobis ... putat*, 2.4). The seeds are there from the start. In his years of active military service before becoming emperor, Trajan's position as *imperator* did not prevent him behaving as one of his men (10.3) and 'you regarded yourself as an ordinary citizen' (*priuatus*, 10.4). Pliny goes so far as to call him a 'fellow-soldier', *commilito* (15.5, cf. 19.3).[20] Trajan continues this behaviour. Hence he is praised for his accessibility (*facilitas*) which he demonstrates at his accession (23.2) and thereafter by his adoption or even extension of Nerva's 'open house' policy (47.4) and by his personal approachability (48.1; *humanitas*, 49.5; *suauitas* and *iucunditas*, 49.7). It is to Trajan's credit that he adopts no airs and graces but retains his former 'sense of respect' (*humanitas* and *uerecundia*, 24.2). According to Pliny, he brings the perspective of a *priuatus* to the position of emperor (44.1–2), even to the extent of offering accountability in court (36.4), of attending his proclamation as consul (described as *moderatio* and *sanctitas*, 63.8) and taking the consul's oath (64.1), of submitting himself to the jurisdiction of law in the forum (65.1) and of behaving as an equal of the candidates nominated for office (71.3, another sign of his *humanitas*, 71.5). In short, 'a ruler behaved the same as a citizen, an emperor the same as one of his subjects' (64.4). Similarly, he is said to conduct his private life like an ordinary citizen (83–4). This behaviour is best captured in the quality Pliny calls *humanitas* and in the concept of *ciuilitas*: courtesy.[21]

This *ciuilitas* emerges more generally throughout Trajan's conduct of politics (87.1), in particular, for example, in his not seeking, or reluctance to accept, honours and high office. This motif gains prominence from repetition. Early in the speech, Pliny describes

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20 On Trajan as *priuatus* see Rees in this volume and his forthcoming paper 'To be and not to be: Pliny's paradoxical Trajan'.

21 Pliny's use of the adjective (2.7) and adverb (29.2) in this sense anticipates the coining of *ciuilitas*, which first appears in Suet. *Aug.* 51. See Wallace-Hadrill 1982 for a full exploration of the ambivalence of the 'citizen-emperor ideal' and the rituals of 'deference' and 'condescension'.

the omen by which Trajan was acclaimed *Imperator*, which Trajan alone was unwilling to acknowledge (5.2–5). The same point recurs in the award of the title 'Father of his Country', *Pater patriae*, over which a battle was fought with Trajan's modesty (*modestia*) (21.1). Then there is the question of Trajan's third consulship (56–60). He could have followed precedent and held this in 99 (57.1), but declined to do so until the following year (60.4). Later, Pliny raises the prospect of a fourth consulship (78–9). Another battle is in prospect between the Senate's loyalty (*pietati* ... *senatus*) and the ruler's moderation (*modestia principis*) (79.4). This picture of Trajan's reluctance deftly characterizes his *moderatio* and demonstrates his suitability to be emperor (5.5).

This is Trajan's personal manifestation of the classic trait of self-control.[22] Pliny has made it the mainstay of his oration.[23] That is, he has adapted the standard material to Trajan's particular configuration of virtue. Pliny cleverly blends panegyric and protreptic to his senatorial perspective: hence the respect with which the emperor treats the Senate is absolutely critical (76.1–6) and hence the speech is, technically, addressed to the Senate (*patres conscripti*, e.g. 1.1, 90.1, 95.1) in a framework which encloses apostrophe to Trajan.[24]

Pliny also capitalizes upon two of the titles granted to Trajan. He develops the title of *Pater patriae* into an image of Trajan as father to his people: 'How generous and kind you are in fulfilment of this title! You conduct yourself towards your citizens as a father towards his children!' (21.4), evoking this emotive imagery by twice describing Trajan as *parens publicus* (26.3, 87.1) and suggesting that

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22 In essence *moderatio* (54.5, 56.3, 63.8; also *modestia*, 58.2, 79.4 and *temperantia*, 82.8): see Wallace-Hadrill 1982, 41–2 and on the links with *humanitas* and *ciuilitas* 43–4.

23 The virtue of *ciuilitas* will be not praised again in the panegyrical corpus until Mamertinus' *gratiarum actio* for the consulship to Julian in 362 (*Pan. Lat.* III (XI)): see Rees in this volume.

24 Cf. Syme 1958, 58 on 'Trajan's career of service—and subordination ... The word is "obsequium"'; Wallace-Hadrill (1981, 316) says: 'The focus is not on the possession of power, but on the control of it in deference to other members of society.' On imperial deference to the Senate see Wallace-Hadrill 1982, 37–8 and on the link between *ciuilitas* and respect for the Senate ibid. 45. On the *Panegyric* as 'écrit senatorial' see Durry 1938, 21–4 and F. Gamberini, *Stylistic Theory and Practice in the Younger Pliny* (Hildesheim–Zurich–New York, 1983) 393 on address and apostrophe in the speech. Bartsch 1994 also recognizes Pliny's senatorial perspective (e.g. 186) but highlights other perspectives which present Trajan—and Pliny—in a less complimentary light (166–7).

his benign protection encourages people to raise children again (27). The climax of the oration is Pliny's fulsome justification of Trajan's title 'The Best', *Optimus* (88.4–10, developing the brief mention at 2.7).[25] Pliny insists upon its appositeness: 'It may seem ready-made and commonplace, but actually it is an innovation. You could know of no one who deserved it previously' (88.4). This is because it embraces all the virtues (88.6). Pliny proceeds to draw an analogy with Jupiter who is worshipped as *Optimus Maximus* (88.8). He even suggests that the title *Optimus* will always be associated with Trajan in the same way as the title *Augustus* is always a reminder of the first Augustus (88.10).

Pliny: having it both ways[26]

Pliny insists from the outset upon Trajan's being what we might call 'an ordinary bloke' or 'a regular guy' (*ciuilitas*) yet cannot resist intimations of immortality throughout the speech. This is his programmatic statement: 'Nowhere should we flatter him as a god and a divinity: we are talking of a fellow-citizen, not a tyrant, a father not a master' (2.3). Not surprisingly, Pliny attributes Trajan's election as emperor to divine agency (e.g. 5.1–2, 10.4, 72 and 74). But early in the speech, when describing Nerva's search for a suitable heir, Pliny asserts that the essential requirement is for the person who is 'the best and most like the gods' (*optimum ... dis simillimum*, 7.5). Later, when praising Trajan's solution of the crisis caused by a shortage of grain in Egypt, Pliny describes his transferring of natural resources from one part of the world to another

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[25] On the title *Optimus* see Durry 1938, App. 1 (231–2) for a survey of the evidence. He concludes that Trajan was known as *Optimus* throughout his reign, although the point at which this became official is unclear. There are coins with dedications OPTIMI PRINCIPI from 103 and in the summer of 114 Trajan took the agnomen *Optimus* (Dio 68.23.1).

[26] A panegyrist's trait: see Syme's remark quoting *Pan.* 46.3 *utrumque recte* (in his review of Durry 1938), *JRS* 28 (1938) 217–224 at 224) and the excellent discussion by W.S. Maguinness, 'Locutions and Formulae of the Latin Panegyrists,' *Hermathena* 48 (1933) 117–38 at 117-24. Pliny's exploitation of antithesis and paradox is central to Roger Rees' forthcoming paper, 'To be or not to be: Pliny's paradoxical Trajan'. Bartsch (1994, 148–87, esp. 149, 183) offers a provocative interpretation of Pliny's use of antithesis in her reading of the *Panegyric* as 'an obsessive attempt to prove its own sincerity' (149) which at the same time 'names itself clearly as a study in moderation' (158).

in terms of superhuman powers (32.1–2).[27] When commending his changes in inheritance tax Pliny suggests that Trajan has outdone even the gods through his retrospective legislation (40.3). He becomes bolder when, in praise of Trajan's sharing his consulship with two third-time consuls, he implies that this is the act of someone more than human (61.9). More explicit still is his description of Trajan's third consulship in which he was 'a candidate not only for the consulship but for immortality' (63.1). Again, Trajan is set on a par with divinity in his role as arbitrator of disputes: 'These are the real concerns of a ruler and even of a god, to reconcile states in rivalry ... finally, like a swift-moving star, to see and hear everything and to be there to help right away wherever you are called for' (80.3). Pliny implies that Trajan is the chosen deputy of Jupiter (80.4).

Pliny is concerned to avoid calling Trajan a god by presenting a rationalizing picture of him, yet evokes a charismatic kind of divinity nonetheless.[28] He mentions the 'divinity of our leader' (2.7) but immediately turns the focus on to his human qualities. This is designed as a stark contrast with Domitian's insistence on being addressed as 'master and god', *dominus et deus*.[29] This antithesis with Domitian pervades the oration,[30] but is perhaps most developed at the centre of the speech in an extended passage on the ways in which the two emperors deal with people (48–9).[31] Pliny praises Trajan for his accessibility and for setting people at their ease (48.1–2). In contrast, Domitian is depicted as a terrifying monster lurking in a cave licking up the blood of relatives he has murdered or emerging to slaughter the most illustrious citizens

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27 See K. Scott, 'The Elder and Younger Plinys on Emperor Worship', *TAPA* 63 (1932) 156–65 at 164.

28 The antithesis is taken from Wallace-Hadrill 1981, 317 who, however, underestimates the evocations of divinity in the *Panegyric*. See now Bartsch 1994, 163–4.

29 See e.g. Suet. *Dom.* 13.2, Mart. 5.8.1, 7.34.8.

30 E.g. 16.3, 20.4, 33.4, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50.5, 52.3, 53.4, 54, 55.7, 62.3, 66.2–3, 72.2, 76 and cf. M. Molin, 'Le *Panégyrique de Trajan*: Éloquence d'apparat ou programme politique néo-stoicien?', *Latomus* 48 (1989) 785–97 at 787 n.34 and Fedeli 1989, 439–44 on Domitian's demerits. The negative picture of Domitian is one of the features shared with Tacitus' *Agricola*, with which Pliny was clearly familiar: see R.T. Bruère, 'Tacitus and Pliny's "Panegyric"', *CP* 49 (1954) 161–79 on the reciprocal relationship between Tacitus and Pliny; on *Agricola* specifically see 162–4. On the antithesis with Domitian see Bartsch 1994, 154, 159–60.

31 See S.M. Braund, 'The solitary feast—a contradiction in terms?', *BICS* 41 (1996) 37–52.

(48.3). Pliny emphasizes that walls are no protection against vengeance (49.1) and praises Trajan for surrounding himself with his subjects instead of seeking solitude (49.2). These stark differentiations are explicitly justified as a demonstration of how Trajan is reforming the character of the principate, which had become corrupted (53). Comparison, he asserts, is central to panegyric because 'the person who does not detest bad rulers enough cannot adore good rulers enough' (53.2).[32]

Panegyric for a new reign

The contrast with Domitian is a reminder that the *Panegyric* dates from the early years of Trajan's reign. Domitian died in 96 and after Nerva's short reign Trajan became emperor early in 98 and arrived in Rome for the first time early in 99. Pliny's speech in the Senate in September 100 can therefore plausibly be regarded as part of the optimistic outpouring of literature which typically greeted a new emperor on his accession.[33] Although such speeches of gratitude had long been obligatory,[34] they were usually brief—and tedious, as Pliny himself observes (*Ep.* 3.18.6). Pliny has taken a duty (explicitly, the *senatus consultum* prescribing the *gratiarum actio*: *Pan.* 4.1) as an opportunity to celebrate the new emperor.

Panegyric which participates in what we might call 'accession literature' has a difficult task to fulfil. Of course it needs to deliver praise of actual achievements and behaviour—and yet at or soon after the accession there may not be much material available. Pliny turns this potential difficulty to his advantage in his

[32] Hence panegyric and satire are complementary genres: see S. Braund, 'Paradigms of Power: Roman emperors in Roman satire' in *Humour and History*, ed. K. Cameron (Oxford, 1993) 56–69. On comparison as a central element of panegyric see W.S. Maguinness, 'Some Methods of the Latin panegyrists', *Hermathena* 57 (1932) 42–61 at 45–51, a feature which he rightly connects with assertions of superhuman or divine status. Maguinness observes that Pliny even compares Trajan with future emperors at *Pan.* 73.6 (*onerasti futuros principes*). Bartsch (1994, 170) attempts to dissolve the distinctions between eulogy and satire by appealing to the gap between the 'public transcipt' and the 'hidden transcript'.

[33] In this respect, the *Panegyric* resembles the later panegyrics tied to occasions of *aduentus* (arrival), as discussed by MacCormack 1975, 157–8.

[34] On *gratiarum actiones* see Radice 1968, 166, Durry 1938, 3–5, Hammond 1938, 120, with Fedeli's caution about the date of the establishment of this practice (1989, 400–4).

rhetorical exhortation to Trajan to accept his third consulship—rhetorical because Pliny knows all along that Trajan has accepted it (60.4). He argues that rumour reports Trajan's conduct of his second consulship (held when Trajan was abroad) to have shown him to be 'the essence of justice, kindness and tolerance' but insists that he requires actual proof instead of rumour and that this can only come from a third consulship (59.3)! And despite its length (on which see below), the oration actually is relatively thin on material points, for which it compensates in generalizations.[35]

Panegyric produced so early in the reign can serve another function besides praise: it can reflect or even prescribe a programme of behaviour to the new emperor. In the *Panegyric*, the key theme, as I have argued above, is *humanitas* and *ciuilitas*. These are the qualities that Trajan is urged to (continue to) exhibit. Of course, the panegyrist has to exercise considerable tact in offering such a protreptic. Pliny's tact and persuasion emerges in his assertion that Trajan is 'the one man who relishes the ancestral traditions and excellence, who strives and competes with himself, with no other rival or role-model' (13.5). The idea that the new emperor is already perfect and therefore already supplies his own model is a successful means of argument. And the role of the panegyrist in this relationship readily resembles that of adviser to a king, reminiscent of Seneca's relationship with Nero.[36]

I have emphasized that Pliny's oration is tied to a particular moment and context. In fact, we need to distinguish between the original delivery of the speech and its subsequent expansion for publication. Pliny delivered the original version as his thanks for his suffect consulship of the months of September and October in the Senate on 1st September 100. This accounts for his focus upon the inauguration of Trajan's reign, especially his reception in Rome (22–3), for his praise of Trajan's civility in his dealings with senators and the Senate (e.g. 76.1–6) and for the section at the very end in which Pliny talks about himself as consul and about his relationship with the emperor (95, cf. 90.3). Topical details fit the

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35 Syme (1958, 31–42, 57–8) supplements the *Panegyric* by reading between the lines. See too Fedeli (1989, 461–97 and 511–13) on Trajan's programme as glimpsed behind the *Panegyricus*.

36 See Molin (n.30) esp. 792–7 on the relationship between panegyrist and ruler. But his argument that the virtues Pliny mentions articulate a neo-Stoic programme perhaps underestimates the extent to which Stoic ideas had entered the mainstream of Roman élite thought by this period.

moment for which the speech was written, for example, the elaborate dramatization of Trajan's eventual acceptance of his third consulship (59–60) in 99. More significantly, Pliny suggests an analogy between Trajan and Hercules (explicitly at 14.5, hinted at at 82.6–7), which Trajan evidently encouraged. Coins of 100 showing Hercules Gaditanus make the connection with Trajan's southern Spanish provenance.[37] Dio Chrysostom's first oration *On Kingship*, probably delivered in Rome early in Trajan's reign, presents Hercules as Trajan's 'prototype and avatar' in the extended climax to the speech (*Or.* 1.56–84).[38] And at about this time, a new legion, the Second Traiana, took Hercules as its emblem.

Pliny later expanded the speech substantially, perhaps by a factor of two or three, for publication.[39] He states his purposes in publishing this expanded version: 'Firstly, to recommend his virtues to our emperor with genuine praise, secondly to advise future rulers of the most effective way to attain the same renown, not by offering instruction but by presenting a role-model' (*Ep.* 3.18.2). The risk of seeming presumptuous in offering advice to the emperor is thereby palliated (3.18.3). The expanded version of the speech evidently reflects events subsequent to September 100. For example, when Pliny anticipates Trajan's celebration of a triumph (*Pan.* 16.3–17.4) he may have had in mind Trajan's First Dacian War which began in March 101 and, perhaps, the consequent triumph celebrated in 102/3.[40] A key point which undoubtedly reflects the general context, without being definitively connected with either the original oration or the expanded version, is Pliny's praise of Trajan as *Optimus* (2.7, 88.4–10): as noted above, this appellation was in currency from the start of Trajan's reign and

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[37] On the parallel with Hercules see Syme 1958, 58. On the new coin type of 100 see P.L. Strack, *Untersuchungen zur römischen Reichsprägung des zweiten Jahrhunderts I* (Stuttgart, 1931) 95–104.

[38] C.P. Jones, *The Roman World of Dio Chrysostom* (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1978) 117; see 115–23 on Dio and Trajan, including 116–20 on the similar ideology of Pliny and Dio's first oration.

[39] See *Ep.* 3.13 on the difficulties in composing such a speech, because the content is utterly familiar to everyone already, and *Ep.* 3.18 on his expansion of the original for publication. For speculation on the extent and nature of the expansion see Radice 1968, 166, Gamberini (n.24) 381, Fedeli 1989, 405–11.

[40] See Durry 1938, 13–14 for the debate about whether or not this is prediction after the event. Syme (review of Durry, (n.26) 218) concurs with Durry (9–15) in seeing no reason to date publication later than 101 (for a view that it may date from up to three years later see Fedeli 1989, 405–11).

coins bearing the legend OPTIMVS appeared from 103 onwards.[41] The *Panegyric* is, then, rooted in its context(s).

Yet Pliny was also seizing the opportunity offered by an obligatory speech of thanks to express a broader political vision for the future.[42] This was a kind of innovation. But Pliny was not working in a vacuum. Besides the Greek models and the prescriptions of rhetorical theory mentioned above, there were earlier Roman sources of inspiration. In particular, the themes and presentation of Pliny's oration are illuminated by a comparison with Cicero's ideas on how to address the man with absolute power and by juxtaposition with the model presented in Seneca's inaugurative protreptic to the young emperor Nero, *On Clemency*.

Cicero's panegyrics of Caesar

Cicero's 'Caesarian' speeches dating from 46–5 BC undoubtedly provided a model for later panegyrists. The three speeches—*For Marcellus*, *For Ligarius* and *For King Deiotarus*—have much in common. They were all delivered before Caesar, and in effect to Caesar, in the Senate, in the forum and in Caesar's house respectively. They all address some of the circumstances and consequences of power being vested (for the first time) in one man. That is, the speeches mark the inauguration of Caesar's one-man rule. These, then, are the earliest Roman imperial panegyrics that survive. The three speeches are rooted in specific contexts, yet those contexts are used by Cicero to praise Caesar and, perhaps, to proffer a programme for the future.

For Marcellus is perhaps the most obviously panegyrical of the three speeches. It is Cicero's articulation of thanks to Caesar for his demonstration of mercy (*clementia*) towards M. Claudius Marcellus, who had supported Pompey in the civil war, in response to an appeal for his pardon which was supported by the entire Senate. Cicero's speech of gratitude (*gratiarum actio*, 33) in the Senate in 46 BC marked the breaking of a long, determined silence (cf. *Fam.* 4.4.4) since his return to Rome after his own pardon by Caesar. Cicero's opening sentence claims that his panegyric of Caesar will be delivered in what he claims to be his old (i.e. frank) way of

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41 See n.25.
42 Cf. Radice 1968, 169.

speaking: 'It is absolutely impossible for me to refrain from remarking on this amazing leniency, this unusual and unprecedented clemency, this consistent restraint in a position of supreme power, this unbelievable and virtually divine wisdom' (1). He declares the impossibility of adequately representing Caesar's achievements in words yet asserts that this day is the day of highest praise (4–5): Caesar's military conquests are less significant than the self-control he has demonstrated in his act of *clementia*, which provokes Cicero to classify him as 'most resembling god' (8–9).[43] One reason is that unlike his other achievements, which were shared with others, 'this is entirely his own' (11). Cicero prophesies that his other monuments will fade 'but this justice (*iustitia*) and merciful disposition (*lenitas animi*) of yours will flourish more and more daily' (12). The competitiveness of the leading players which we associate with the Republic has now given way to the kind of competition we noticed in Pliny (*Pan.*13.5), competition with oneself: Caesar is declared to have already surpassed all others 'in fairness (*aequitas*) and pity (*misericordia*)': 'today you have actually surpassed yourself' (12).

Cicero now begins to shift from praise to programme by introducing into the speech prospects for the future. He asserts that the gods have conferred 'all hopes of safety/prosperity (*salutis*)' upon Caesar's clemency (*clementia*) and wisdom (*sapientia*) (18) and lays out a programme of action for him: 'setting up courts of law, restoring confidence, controlling passions, promoting population growth, binding together with stern laws everything that has disintegrated and been dismantled' (23). He calls on Caesar to heal the wounds of war, wounds which only he can heal (24). Complaining of the brief span of Caesar's life so far (25) he attributes 'divine excellence' to Caesar (26) and looks towards an immortality beyond the body (28). The speech, in short, attributes to Caesar many items from the standard pool of virtues—*sapientia, iustitia, aequitas, liberalitas, bonitas,* but all presented in a way in which they complement the central focus of the speech, Caesar's *clementia.* Like Pliny's *Panegyric,* this is a speech which exhibits most of the standard features of the *basilikos logos* but which is at the same time firmly rooted in a particular ideological moment. Cicero is concerned to establish Caesar's *clementia* and thereby encourage him to

[43] Perhaps echoed by Pliny at 7.5 *dis simillimum.*

maintain that quality, just as Pliny's priority is to praise and encourage Trajan's *humanitas* and *ciuilitas*. And, like Pliny, Cicero closes his speech by asserting the personal relationship between panegyrist and his subject. The climax to Cicero's praise is his declaration of personal devotion to Caesar (32), after which he delivers an elaborate closing expression of gratitude asserting that Caesar has outdone his generosity to Cicero by pardoning Marcellus (33–4).

For Ligarius (46 BC) and *For King Deiotarus* (45 BC) exhibit many of the same features. In *For Ligarius* Cicero is working to extend Caesar's recent pardon of Marcellus (to which he refers at 37) to Ligarius, another Pompeian supporter. His central tactic is to appeal to Caesar's *misericordia* (1) and he does this by celebrating Caesar's *clementia* in emotive language (6). Besides his *clementia* (10, 15, 19, 30), he praises Caesar's 'generosity' (*liberalitas*, 6, 23) and 'wisdom' (*sapientia*, 6), his 'humanity' (*humanitas*, 13) and 'mildness' (*lenitas*, 15) and 'goodness' (*bonitas*, 37), which all come down to a single heading which consists of Caesar's *uel humanitatis uel clementiae uel misericordiae* (29, cf. 37). In a passage which resembles Pliny's emphasis upon Trajan's role as father of his people, Cicero claims to be pleading for Ligarius as if before a father, not a judge (30). And in the climax to the speech Cicero asserts that to show pity to other men is to approach most closely to the status of divinity (38). Although *For Ligarius* is, of course, a forensic speech, it borrows many of the regular tropes of panegyric and evokes topics treated in *For Marcellus*.

For King Deiotarus exhibits the same concerns again. Deiotarus, king of Armenia Minor, had been another active supporter of Pompey during the civil war but had secured a pardon from Caesar in 47; Cicero is defending him against a subsequent accusation of treachery. Accordingly, the speech is lavish with praise of the king, but it focuses still more upon Caesar's 'outstanding and unique character' (4). He declares that 'we have seen you as far from being a tyrant but rather as a leader of unsurpassed clemency in his victory' (34) and closes the speech with a series of appeals to Caesar's *clementia*: 'many are the memorials of your clemency, but none greater than the amnesty you have granted to those who owe their lives to you' (40). Significantly, the speech ends with the words *clementiae tuae* (43).

The three speeches present a substantial corpus of panegyrical

material rehearsing many of the standard features of the genre, in particular, a combination of praise of proven virtues with a programme or expression of hopes for the future. In Caesar's case, the outstanding virtue which is attributed to him is *clementia*, a term which suddenly entered political discourse at this time not only in these speeches but also with the Senate's decree in 45 BC to build a temple to the *Clementia Caesaris* with the statues of Clementia and Caesar clasping hands (although this temple was never built).[44] The balance between programme and prescription is, again, a fine one.[45] And all three speeches are rooted in specific contexts early in Caesar's rule and, especially in the case of *For Marcellus*, can be regarded as performing the inaugurative function of imperial accession literature. These speeches, then, may be regarded as prototypes of Roman imperial panegyric.

Panegyric and protreptic: Seneca, On Clemency

Cicero's Caesarian speeches commending and encouraging *clementia* provided important models for all later panegyrists. Many later emperors would lay claim to *clementia*. This is most memorable in the panegyrical work which Seneca wrote to his pupil, the young emperor Nero, early in his reign, the treatise *On Clemency*.[46] Ostensibly this treatise, which was planned in three books,[47] although only the first and the beginning of the second survive, resembles other Senecan treatises, most obviously *On Anger*, also in three books. In fact, the two works do in many ways form a complementary pair, since, as we have seen above, anger and pity are readily contrasted with one another (Cic. *Deiot.* 40). But Seneca

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[44] See Weinstock 1971, 233–43.

[45] Weinstock (1971, 238) sees Cicero as the initiator of *clementia* as a political term where I would prefer to see Cicero as one of several organs of Caesar's political self-representation, which can be seen in part at least as an attempt at self-definition through antithesis with the cruelty of Sulla.

[46] *On Clemency* was written shortly after Nero's accession, in AD 55 or perhaps 56. The date of composition, especially whether or not it precedes the murder of Britannicus early in 55, is hotly disputed among scholars. See e.g. F. Giancotti, 'Il *De clementia*', *Rendiconti della classe di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche dell' Accademia dei Lincei 8th ser.* 9 (1954) 587–609; P. Grimal, *Sénèque ou la conscience de l'Empire* (Paris, 1978) 119–31; M.T. Griffin, *Seneca: A philosopher in politics* (Oxford, 1976) 133–4 and Appendix A, 3.

[47] This is implied by the programmatic statement at *Clem.* 1.3.1.

goes to considerable trouble to distinguish clemency (*clementia*) from pity (*misericordia*). In Cicero's day, it seems, the two words could be used interchangeably, but from Seneca's Stoic perspective, it was important to distinguish the virtue of *clementia* from the weakness of *misericordia* (2.3.1–7.5 = end of extant text).

To understand *On Clemency*, it is crucial to set it in context. Along with other compositions by Seneca and by others,[48] it is part of the inauguration of Nero's reign and in that respect may be seen as closely analogous to Cicero's *For Marcellus* and to Pliny's *Panegyric* and, doubtless, to other panegyrics which have not survived. Seneca deploys markedly similar tactics to those used in other panegyrics, as I shall indicate briefly.

He starts with praise of Nero as he is now, at the moment of his accession: 'I have undertaken, Nero Caesar, to write on the subject of clemency to serve as a mirror (*ut quodam modo speculi uice fungerer*) and reveal you to yourself as one destined to reach the greatest of all pleasures' (1.1.1). That is, he is asking Nero to continue behaving as he now does. This compliment combines the panegyrical motifs of praise and programme observed elsewhere. Seneca continues even more explicitly: 'no one looks for any model for you to copy except yourself' (1.1.6). Nero is so perfect that he must be his own role-model.[49] Seneca's central idea is that the emperor needs to be a *sapiens* (wise man), in this respect building on Plato's ideal of philosopher-kings and on ideas first formulated in Latin by Cicero in his (fragmentary) *On the Republic* and harnessed in (for example) Augustus' self-representation in his *Achievements* and in the Golden Shield. Nero's perfection consists of his *innocentia* (1.1.5), 'freedom from guilt' of civil war, in contrast with the civil conflict that marred the opening of Claudius' reign,[50] and above all his *clementia*, which is claimed as the essence of *humanitas* (*Clem.* 1.3.2). Seneca is praising Nero for the *clementia* he has so far exercised and promoting *clementia* as a key element in his conduct for the future.

Three features in particular evoke the other panegyrical texts we have already considered: imagery of fatherhood, comparisons

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48 Seneca composed several key speeches for Nero, including a funeral speech for Claudius and accession speeches to the praetorian guard and to the Senate: see Griffin (n.46) 133.

49 Cf. Plin. *Pan.* 13.5.

50 See T.P. Wiseman, 'Calpurnius Siculus and the Claudian Civil War', *JRS* 72 (1982) 57–67.

with predecessors and analogy with divinity. Seneca uses many strands of imagery in *On Clemency* to articulate his vision of the relationship between emperor and state as mutually dependent and as one organic whole. Central to this is the mind/soul and body (1.3.5, 1.5.1) analogy, supplemented by head and body (2.2.1), with imagery of doctor/surgeon and patient (1.5.1, 1.9.6, 1.17.1–2), rider and horse (1.24.2), farmer and trees (2.7.4), king bee (*sic*) and hive (1.19.2–3) and so on, tending in the same direction of mutual need and benefit. The image of the emperor as father is one of those strands (1.14, 1.16.2–3) and it is hardly surprising that Seneca 'cashes' this image in the title *Pater patriae* (1.14.2). Seneca does not load his treatise with lengthy comparisons between Nero and his predecessors to the extent that Pliny contrasts Trajan with Domitian (discussed above), but the entire treatise invokes a contrast with his immediate predecessor Claudius. Moreover, it does incorporate an explicit contrast with the young Octavian who had blood on his hands, the antithesis of Nero's claimed *innocentia* (1.1.5, 1.9.1, 1.11.1–3). Finally, Seneca throughout suggests the emperor's superhuman status (e.g. in the image of the bright and beneficent star, 1.3.3) and at 1.7.1–2 presents a sustained analogy between the emperor and the divinity.

On Clemency is not a classic panegyric but it participates in the genre's conventions enough for it to deserve this as one of its labels. The work is, in short, a hybrid: a philosophical disquisition on one of the classic virtues of a ruler and a didactic treatise addressed to the new ruler.[51] In this, Seneca has incorporated many of the tropes of panegyric associated with literature celebrating an accession and inaugurating a new reign. It is one of several works composed at the beginning of Nero's reign which welcome the new emperor with a reflection or articulation of his self-representation and programme, often through antithesis with his predecessor Claudius. It is therefore rewarding to situate *On Clemency* alongside Seneca's political satire of Claudius, *Apocolocyntosis*, as well as the *Eclogues* of Calpurnius Siculus and the proem to Lucan's epic poem, *Civil War* (1.33–66). Seneca devotes most of his brief prose satire *Apocolocyntosis* to a savage attack on Claudius' faults and vices. But

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[51] There is not space here to pursue a detailed comparison with Isocrates' speech of advice to Nicocles, Evagoras' son and successor. Isocrates' focus in *To Nicocles* is essentially similar to Seneca's in *On Clemency*, although Seneca not surprisingly prioritizes *clementia* above the other virtues he mentions.

he does incorporate a verse panegyric of the new emperor Nero in 32 hexameters.[52] In this epic-style insertion, Nero's origin and superhuman life expectancy are described in elevated phrases. Seneca introduces Phoebus to complement Nero on his beauty and artistry and his bringing of justice and happiness to the world and to compare Nero with the Morning Star, the Evening Star and the sun (*Apoc.* 4.1). That is, Seneca suggests an association if not an assimilation between Nero and Phoebus: an intimation of immortality.

Proto-imperial panegyric: Cicero's praise of Pompey

Yet panegyric is not exclusively an imperial phenomenon. This is suggested by a consideration of Cicero's oration before the people in 66 BC arguing that Pompey be given command of the war in Asia against Mithridates, *On Pompey's Command.* Much of this speech is devoted to praise of Pompey in a prefiguring of imperial panegyric. Early in the speech he declares his theme: 'the unique and extraordinary qualities of Pompey' (3). Accordingly, he endows Pompey with a wide range of virtues. Of course, this speech has its specific context which demands that Cicero emphasize Pompey's military expertise. So he organises his material around the four qualities necessary in a general: 'military knowledge, courage, authority, good fortune' (*scientiam rei militaris, uirtutem, auctoritatem, felicitatem,* 28, cf. 49). First he deals briefly with Pompey's knowledge and experience (28), covering here the standard topic of the subject's early years and formation, in Pompey's case in school and then in his father's army where he gained military knowledge not from others' instructions but from holding commands himself. Then Cicero expands upon his ability in 29–35 adding to his definition 'hard work, endurance, application, swiftness and deliberation' (*labor, fortitudo, industria, celeritas* and *consilium*). Twice in close succession he uses the words 'unbelievable and divine excellence' (*incredibilis ac diuina uirtus,* 33, echoed at 36 and cf. 'fallen from heaven', *de caelo delapsum,* 41) and as proof of this he asserts that Pompey has other qualities necessary in a great

[52] We can only speculate on the relation of these verses to the lost *laudes Neronis* that Lucan composed for the Neronia in 60. The proem to Lucan's *Civil War* is clearly a reprise of the proem to Virgil's *Georgics* (1.1–38) in which Octavian/Augustus is treated on a par with the gods praised there.

general: 'freedom from guilt, self-control, loyalty, accessibility, talent and humanity' (*innocentia, temperantia, fides, facilitas, ingenium* and *humanitas,* 36), qualities which he proceeds to demonstrate. Then he illustrates Pompey's *auctoritas* (43–6) and *felicitas* (47–8). As in the later panegyrics, comparison features prominently. In his introductory words about the general, Cicero asserts Pompey's uniqueness. He surpasses contemporaries and predecessors: 'He stands alone as a man, one who in his excellence has surpassed the glory not only of his contemporaries but even the record of ancient times' (27). Later, after saying that he would demonstrate Pompey's qualities by comparison with others (36), he refrains from doing that because Pompey himself provides 'examples of every kind of distinction' (44).[53]

Towards the end of the speech, after his panegyric of Pompey, Cicero refers to the objections raised against vesting power in one man (59–62). Cicero's arguments centre upon the nature of the crisis and above all upon the uniqueness of Pompey to meet that crisis. 'One and only' (*unus*) is Cicero's key note (e.g. *in uno Cn. Pompeio,* 59; *unius adulescentis uirtuti,* 62; *in hoc uno homine,* 62). That is, Cicero singles Pompey out in terms which make him a proto-*princeps* and which consequently lay the groundwork for later imperial panegyrics. Cicero was later to rue the precedent that he helped to set by vesting so much power in one individual, a precedent that ultimately contributed to the weakening of the Republican constitution and the rise of the Principate.[54] *On Pompey's Command* raises one man head and shoulders above the rest on to a virtually divine level. It presents a proto-imperial panegyric. Later, Cicero, Seneca and Pliny develop and elaborate the prose panegyric to articulate combinations of praise and prescription in a process of subtle persuasion to the autocrat to accommodate the wishes of his subjects.[55]

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[53] Cf. Plin. *Pan.* 13.5 and the mirror image at Sen. *Clem.* 1.1.1.

[54] Cicero realises that Pompey would have acted as Caesar did in the same position: *Fam.* 4.9.2.

[55] I have benefited enormously from seeing a paper (as yet unpublished) by Roger Rees (Newcastle) on Pliny's penchant for the juxtaposition of apparently antithetical combinations of virtues in the *Panegyric* and from Mary Whitby's astute editorial comments.

I have only just seen D.S. Levene's article 'God and Man in the classical Latin Panegyric', *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 43 (1997) 66–103, a useful discussion of religious themes and in particular the divine/human axis or antithesis in Cicero's *For Marcellus* and Pliny's *Panegyric.*

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CHAPTER THREE

THE PRIVATE LIVES OF PUBLIC FIGURES IN LATIN PROSE PANEGYRIC

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This essay considers to what extent, how and to what effect Latin prose panegyrists made use of details of emperors' private lives in their work. The surviving texts cover a broad sweep in time, from Trajan to Theodosius. With the exception of Pliny's panegyric of Trajan, all the works were delivered in Gaul or by Gallic orators. Echoes of earlier speeches resonate in many of the texts, testifying to the orators' consciousness of the traditions and formulae of their genre. But the texts also encompass a wide range of social and political landscapes—each author had to adapt the conventions of the genre to his own particular circumstances. Therefore, although the surviving corpus of material constitutes a literary continuum, the socio-political implications of each text should only be seen in isolation.[1]

The panegyrics are dominated by praise of imperial achievements and virtues.[2] The orators usually select public manifestations of qualities such as bravery and success in war, justice in legislation, and unmatched generosity towards subjects. General surveys of imperial virtues in Latin prose panegyrics have many good observations, but have often tended to deny the individual orators the flexibility and tact they needed to tailor their deliveries to the circumstances and exigencies of their own time.[3] When a panegyrist expatiates on an 'ideal emperor' he is not establishing a philosophical benchmark against which to measure his addressee, much as he may wish to appear to be doing so; rather, he is

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[1] MacCormack 1975, 159.

[2] For imperial virtues see Fears 1981 and Wallace-Hadrill 1981.

[3] E.g. Born 1934, Burdeau 1964, Storch 1972, L'Huillier 1986. An exception is Seager 1984.

idealizing his particular addressee's virtues by treating them with the full force of his rhetorical ability. A diachronic approach to the use panegyrists made of emperors' private lives should contribute to our appreciation not only of the individual addressees but also of the contemporary political climates, ceremonial, and the relationships between orator and emperor.[4]

Priuatus

From Pericles to the American President, the private conduct of public figures is of perennial interest. Whether leaders aim for consistency between their private and public behaviour, privately transgress standards they publicly claim to uphold or attempt to shield their private life from the glare of public gaze, the ethics of the private self of a public figure attracts intellectual and popular attention. Writing during Nero's reign, Seneca eloquently raises the issue:

> sanctitas, pietas, fides
> priuata bona sunt; quo iuuat reges eant. (*Thyestes* 217–18).
>
> Holiness, piety and trust are qualities of private life; let kings do as they please.

Atreus' denial of the need to cultivate qualities which he categorizes as 'private' helps to condemn him as a tyrant. *Rex* was one of several correlates of *priuatus*.[5] Those holding political office constituted a further correlative group. Cicero used the term *priuatus* to distinguish someone without *potestas*, 'authority', from someone who enjoyed it (*De inuentione* 1.35).[6] The pre-eminent magistracy was, of course, the consulship:

> qua re necesse est, quod mihi consuli praecipuum fuit praeter alios, id iam priuato cum ceteris esse commune. (*Pro Sulla* 9)
>
> Because of this, now that I am *priuatus*, I must share with everybody that which, during my consulship, belonged to me and a few others.[7]

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[4] Despite tendencies to generalize, Mause 1994 has been particularly useful.

[5] For the polarity of *rex* and *priuatus* see e.g. Cic. *Deiot.* 26, 40, *Div.* 1.89; Nep. *Timoth.* 4.2; Sall. *Iug.* 110.1.

[6] Beranger 1982–3.

[7] See also *Verr.* 1.37, *Catil.* 3.29. Even senators without office could be

In the transition from Republic to Empire, the political interpretation of *priuatus* gained an important new sense. The Republican meaning of 'without office or magistracy' survived,[8] but that of 'not emperor' became increasingly dominant.[9] On being proclaimed emperor by his troops Otho began his address to them:

> quis ad uos processerim commilitones, dicere non possum, quia nec priuatum me uocare sustineo princeps a uobis nominatus, nec principem alio imperante. (Tacitus, *Histories* 1.37)[10]

> In what capacity I have come before you, fellow-soldiers, I cannot say; I cannot label myself *priuatus* when designated *princeps* by you, nor *princeps* with another man on the throne.

Thus, despite the difficulty in finding an overarching definition of *priuatus*, we can see that the term did not refer to the emperor. In Seneca's case, it is not so much Atreus' employment of the polarity between *rex* and *priuatus* which is arrogant as his fiercely confident affirmation that a king is therefore at liberty to behave as he wishes. Yet, as we shall see, the philological peculiarities of the notion of the emperor as a *priuatus* were to be exploited by some of our orators.

Trajan

Pliny the Younger's *Panegyric* is a revised version of his speech originally delivered to Trajan before the Senate on 1 September AD 100, in thanks for his suffect consulship.[11] In the speech Pliny uses *priuatus* with various correlates. For example, he refers to the consuls as *priuati*, thereby recognizing the gap between emperor and consul.[12] However, at other points Pliny contravenes this conventional understanding of the word by presenting Trajan as a *priuatus*. At first the distinction between *priuatus* and *princeps* is maintained by referring to Trajan's perception of himself. For, in relating how Nerva appointed Trajan Caesar, Pliny says:

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termed *priuati*, e.g. Cic. *Ad fam.* 1.1.3.

[8] E.g. Tac. *Ann.* 6.2. For other nuances, see Ford Wiltshire 1989, 8–15.

[9] Durry 1938, 44.

[10] See also 1.52; Suet. *Cl.* 41.3; Plin. *Ep.* 2.1.2, 5.3.5.

[11] The speech heads the collection known as the *XII Panegyrici Latini*. For Pliny see Durry 1938, Radice 1969 and Braund in this volume.

[12] E.g. 57.2, 21.4, 60.3.

paruisti enim, Caesar, et ad principatum obsequio peruenisti, nihilque magis a te subiecti animo factum est quam quod imperare coepisti, iam Caesar iam imperator iam Germanicus absens et ignarus, et post tanta nomina, quantum ad te pertinet, priuatus. (9.3)

For, Caesar, you obeyed and you came to the principate by your obedience. The best indicator of your sense of subordination is the fact that you began to rule as Caesar, Imperator and *Germanicus* when you were away from Rome and unaware, and after such grand titles, as far as you were concerned, *priuatus*.

iam te prouidentia deorum primum in locum prouexerat; tu adhuc in secundo resistere atque senescere optabas: priuatus tibi uidebaris, quam diu imperator alius esset. (10.4)[13]

Now the gods' providence had brought you to the highest station; you wanted to reside in second place and to grow old there: you considered yourself *priuatus* as long as there was another emperor.[14]

Priuatus here sets up a distinction between Trajan's status and his perception of it, but the distance between *princeps* and *priuatus* is closed when Pliny pays further tribute to Trajan's popularity in stating how frequently, but without compulsion, Trajan is named in his subjects' wills:

scriberis ab amicis, ab ignotis praeteriris, nihilque inter priuatum et principem est, nisi quod nunc a pluribus amaris. (43.2)

You are included in the wills of friends and passed over by those who do not know you; there is no difference between *priuatus* and *princeps* except that you now have more friends.

Although in this quotation Pliny claims that there is a distinction between *princeps* and *priuatus*, his intent is ironic, for we are clearly supposed to recognize that Trajan is a *priuatus*—with lots of friends. The only difference between *priuatus* and this *princeps* is one of scale.

Later Pliny brings the paradox into sharp focus with the phrase *priuato iudicio principem geris*, 'you conduct your reign with the tact of a *priuatus*' (44.2). By overstepping the conventional usage of the term *priuatus*, Pliny is making a virtue of Trajan's *ciuilitas*, 'civility'.[15] Trajan thinks himself one of the people (2.3–7), his seat

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[13] Discussed by Beranger 1982–3, 41.

[14] Cf. Eutropius, *Breviarium* 8.5.1.

[15] Mause 1994, 140ff.; Beranger 1982–3, 24; Wallace-Hadrill 1982, 41–8; Alan Cameron 1976, 175–80; Braund in this volume pp.61–3.

at the Circus Maximus is level with the people's (51.4), he walks amongst the crowds in Rome (24.2–3), and he considers himself answerable to the law (65.1). These public displays of Trajan's *ciuilitas* are buttressed by details of his private life. Pliny celebrates the absolute consistency between Trajan's public and private behaviour:

> habet hoc primum magna fortuna, quod nihil tectum, nihil occultum esse patitur; principum uero non domus modo sed cubicula ipsa intimosque secessus recludit, omniaque arcana noscenda famae proponit atque explicat. sed tibi, Caesar, nihil accommodatius fuerit ad gloriam quam penitus inspici. sunt quidem praeclara quae in publicum profers, sed non minora ea quae limine tenes. (83.1–2)
>
> A prominent characteristic of high office is that it allows no privacy or seclusion; it opens up not only the houses of emperors but even their bedrooms and private quarters, and unravels and exposes to rumour their every secret. But in your case, Caesar, nothing could be better suited to glory than to be open to the closest scrutiny. Your public conduct is indeed outstanding but no more so than your private life.

Not all of the orators would subscribe to this important ideological assertion that the private conduct of a public figure was, of necessity, open to close scrutiny. All depended on circumstance. The particular quality which Pliny highlights here is Trajan's ability to fashion the characters of his wife Plotina (83.5–8) and sister Marciana (84.1–4) after his own, and therefore have a household notable for its harmony. The women are themselves outstanding for their modesty, humility, and affection but the ultimate object of praise for these qualities is Trajan, their model.[16]

In presenting such details Pliny has a twofold agenda. The first purpose is to compare Trajan with other emperors (53.1–2). Trajan's fidelity to Plotina is not compromised when on campaign:

> nec uero ego in laudibus tuis ponam, quod aduentum tuum non pater quisquam, non maritus expauit: adfectata aliis castitas, tibi ingenita et innata, interque ea quae imputare non possis. (20.2)
>
> Nor do I count amongst your praises the fact that no father and no husband dreaded your arrival; others affect morality, but in you it is inborn and natural, one of those features you cannot claim to your credit.

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[16] Mause 1994, 123, 128–9.

Against this moral integrity Pliny sets Domitian's behaviour (20.4). Trajan's accessibility is another admirable quality:[17] he does not stay at home during the magistrates' elections, whereas previous emperors did (63.1–3); he happily mingles with the crowds (23.2); and his house is not fortified to discourage visitors or repulse attacks, whereas Domitian's was (47.4–49.3). Trajan is moderate in his diet and dines with the people, consuming the same food as they; other emperors typically gorged themselves in seclusion or were ostentatious or miserly hosts (49.6–8, 63.3).[18] Trajan limits his sleep because it keeps him from the people (49.8) whereas other emperors had either been enervated with sleep or stayed awake to plot murder (59.2, 63.3). In what little time is allowed for leisure, Trajan hunts and sails (81); in these pursuits he is brave and hardy, unlike emperors such as Domitian who hunted deliberately weakened animals and, through fear, let others navigate his ship (81–2). By analysing details of Trajan's private life Pliny sets his addressee far apart from his predecessors.

The second reason for dealing so thoroughly with Trajan's private conduct is that Pliny can present the emperor as a model of behaviour for ordinary people. Without any compulsion, Trajan's moral example encourages imitation from his people (45.4–6) and thus he moulds the characters of the young (47.1). This extends to the nature of his household:

> magna ante te, magna post te, iuxta te tamen maxima quies: tantum ubique silentium, tam altus pudor, ut ad paruos penates et larem angustum ex domo principis modestiae et tranquillitatis exempla referantur. (47.6)

> Before you, after you and next to you there is supreme peace: such is the silence everywhere, so profound is the modesty that examples of the emperor's moderation and tranquillity are passed from his house to poor dwellings and small homes.

By applying the same yardstick in private conduct to both emperor and people, Pliny authenticates Trajan's *ciuilitas*.[19] Because he is an example to the citizens, Trajan is a *ciuis*, 'citizen', just as he is *priuatus*. Thus Pliny's use of certain details about Trajan's private life corroborates a key dynamic of the speech's political philosophy; by

[17] Id. 143.
[18] See Braund 1996.
[19] Cf. Eutropius, *Breviarium* 8.2–4.

presenting the emperor as a *ciuis* and *priuatus*, his government is seen to be no tyranny, hardly even a Principate, but a type of Republic.[20]

Maximian, Diocletian, Constantius, Galerius and Constantine

Hazards of survival propel us nearly two hundred years to the next panegyric, also preserved in the *Panegyrici Latini*. It is the first of five extant works delivered under the Dyarchy or Tetrarchy. Speeches X (AD 289) and XI (AD 291) were delivered before Maximian in his capacity as co-emperor of Diocletian. The next two speeches, VIII (AD 297) to Constantius and IX, Eumenius' *For the Restoration of the Schools*, addressed to a provincial governor in 298, were delivered after the creation of the Tetrarchy (AD 293). Speech VII, the last of these five, addressed to Maximian and Constantine in 307, was delivered after Maximian's reinstatement as Augustus following his abdication in 305.[21] This world is not Trajan's, but the difference most significant for this study is the collegiality of government.

There are few details about the emperors' private conduct in these speeches. This fact confirms the heightened importance attached to the emperor's public appearance and to ceremonial in general at this time. Aurelius Victor attributed this change in the presentation of the emperor to Diocletian directly:

> primus ex auro ueste quaesita serici ac purpurae gemmarumque uim plantis concupiuerit. quae quamquam plus quam ciuilia tumidique et affluentis animi, leuia tamen prae ceteris.
>
> (*Book of the Caesars* 39.2–4)

> After he had acquired robes woven with gold, he was the first to long for an abundance of silk, purple, and jewels for his sandals. Although these features were in excess of what suited a citizen, and were the mark of an arrogant and extravagant mind, nevertheless, they pale when compared with his other innovations.[22]

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20 E.g. 2.3, 53.1, 57.5; Beranger 1982–3, 41; Hammond 1938, 121; Fedeli 1989, 461–97; Syme 1938, 223 describes the speech as 'a kind of senatorial manifesto in favour of constitutional monarchy'.

21 Nixon and Rodgers ad locc. for details of the authorship and delivery of the *Panegyrici Latini*.

22 Eutropius, *Breviarium* 9.26 and Nixon and Rodgers 51–2.

By eschewing *ciuilitas* Diocletian and his colleagues distanced themselves from ordinary people. One way in which panegyrists could underscore this shift in power relations was to avoid references to the emperors' private lives, perhaps because details like this would be unbecoming to men of such exalted station and the dignity of the occasion of the speech's delivery; or perhaps, if we follow the Christian polemicist Lactantius, because the private conduct of these emperors was despicable, and unsuitable for panegyric.[23] Whatever the reason, the absence of details about imperial private life marks a significant departure from Pliny's speech.

Mamertinus, tentatively identified as the author of the speeches of 289 and 291,[24] ingeniously turns his reticence about mentioning the Dyarchs' private life to panegyrical advantage. After a catalogue of the duties of an emperor he concludes:

> noctes omnes diesque perpeti sollicitudine pro omnium salute transigere. (X.3.4)
>
> [It is your duty] to spend every day and night in everlasting concern for the well-being of all.

Such is the emperors' sense of responsibility that they have no opportunity for a private life. They simply do not want to take time off, *numquam otio adquiescere uelitis*, 'you never wish to relax' (XI.3.1). The lack of a private life at once elevates the emperors above the affairs of ordinary people and invests them with the role of protectors of the human race.

Mamertinus breaks the silence about the emperors' private life by commenting on their relationship with each other. In both speeches Maximian and Diocletian are cast as brothers, in 289 because of their virtues (9.3), and in 291 because of their military achievements (7.5).[25] They are concordant and devoted to each other. Mamertinus includes details of this relationship because it has significant political implications; the happy and close relationship they share is a guarantee of a peaceful and prosperous world.

In VIII, the anonymous panegyric to Constantius, there are no details of private conduct. The centrepiece of the speech is the successful recovery of Britain in 296. The unity of government is

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[23] E.g. on Maximian's lust, *De mortibus persecutorum* 8.5–6.

[24] Nixon and Rodgers 8–10, 41–2, 76.

[25] Id. 43–51.

established by sustained assertion of universal prosperity, without reference to the emperors' private life.

Eumenius' *For the Restoration of the Schools* was an appeal to a provincial governor to permit the speaker to use his own salary to help continue the programme of regeneration at the school in Autun, known as the Maenianae. The speech contains praise of the emperors, of Autun and some biographical information about Eumenius.[26] There are few references to the emperors' military achievements, more to the benefits of peace, as would befit a speech celebrating rejuvenation. The emperors' generosity is praised (e.g. 3.4, 4.1), but this is in relation to their public benefactions. The private life of emperors intrudes rarely in this discourse. An exception is the list of four qualities which Constantius values:

> tanto studium litterarum fauore prosequitur ut ... sentiat litteras omnium fundamenta esse uirtutum, utpote continentiae modestiae uigilantiae patientiae magistras. (8.1–2)
>
> He honours the study of literature with so much favour that ... he feels that letters are the foundation of all virtues in that they are the teachers of restraint, modesty, vigilance, and patience.

However, Eumenius does not here deviate from his usual subject-matter in order to heap praise on an imperial virtue that would otherwise be neglected in the speech; he artfully associates Constantius' good moral judgement with literature. As the recently appointed professor of rhetoric at the Maenianae, whose current ambition is to secure further benefits for his school, Eumenius' reference to Constantius' personal values is less a selfless and genuine act of eulogy than a considered strategy to further his own interests.[27]

The anonymous panegyric VII was delivered in 307 on the occasion of the marriage of Constantine and Fausta, the daughter of Maximian. The speech also celebrates Constantine's promotion by Maximian to the rank of Augustus. Maximian himself had reclaimed the position of Augustus following his abdication in 305.[28] The orator's agenda in this epithalamium is decidedly political. Both Maximian's return to office and Constantine's promotion

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[26] Rodgers 1989.

[27] A similar strategy is employed with reference to all the emperors at 19.2–4. See Braund in this volume on the importance of the relationship between speaker and subject.

[28] Nixon and Rodgers 178–90.

to Augustus were contrary to Tetrarchic convention and demanded legitimation. Fausta hardly features and is never addressed by herself.

However, although Fausta is sidelined, some details of the emperors' private conduct feature in the speech. Constantine is said to have inherited from Constantius the four virtues of *continentia* ('moderation'), *fortitudo* ('bravery'), *iustitia* ('justice'), and *prudentia* ('wisdom') (3.4).[29] In this claim the orator not only champions a broad range of qualities but also justifies Constantine's re-establishment of dynastic succession. Constantine's *continentia* is illustrated in his attitude towards marriage (4.1); he exhibited no lust as a youth but committed himself to marriage (to Minervina). Maximian's private life is of credit too. His decision to re-enter public life after a period of retirement and rest is seen as a great sacrifice (11.5–12.8). During this retirement he was a *priuatus princeps* (10.5).[30] When he granted to Constantine Fausta's hand and the position of Augustus, Maximian demonstrated generosity greater than previous emperors' because it concerned his private and public capacities (7.3–4).

Therefore, in the case of Constantine's *continentia* and Maximian's *largitio*, 'generosity', the orator uses the marriage as a starting-point for consideration of the emperors' qualities. The marriage of Constantine and Fausta is *hoc pignus*, 'this pledge' (1.4), a phrase with a relatively weak emotional charge. Their relationship is presented more as a dynastic alliance than a romantic attachment. This, in itself is not unusual in Roman marriage, but in this context it is pointed. For conversely, the relationship between the two emperors is couched in terms often used of a married couple. *They* share *concordia*, 'harmony', *pietas*, 'devotion' (1.4), and unanimity (14.2), *they* admire and love each other (13.1), and by their relationship, *they* are providing for the future (of Rome) (2.1–2). Their appearance is even like that of a married couple:

> ipsa uultuum uestrorum contemplatione sentimus ita conuenisse uos, ita non dexteras tantum sed etiam sensus uestros mentesque iunxisse ut, si fieri possit, transire inuicem in pectora uestra cupiatis. (1.5)

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29 On the four 'cardinal' virtues see Wallace-Hadrill 1981.
30 Beranger 1982–3, 39.

> From consideration of your faces, we understand that you are so concordant that you have joined not only your right hands but even your feelings and minds, so that, if it were possible, you want to cross over into each other's hearts.

The transfer of the iconography of marriage to the relationship between the emperors cruelly neglects Fausta, but it generates a powerful impression of imperial harmony. As Mamertinus had before him, the orator of 307 appropriates the language and tropes of private relationships to convey a sense of political unity.

Constantine

The power struggle which followed the abdication in 305 of Diocletian and Maximian resulted in the disintegration of Tetrarchic government into an uneasy Dyarchy and culminated in 324 with Constantine's restoration of monarchy. Relationships between the various emperors and usurpers ranged from the nominally amicable to the overtly hostile. A degree of tension was rarely absent. Accordingly, in the next panegyrics, VI (AD 310), V (AD 311 or 312), XII (AD 313) and IV(AD 321), all addressed to Constantine, the private life of the emperor is not used, either directly or figuratively, to assert the collegiality of government; and unlike Pliny's Trajan, Constantine is not presented as *priuatus* and is not accredited with *ciuilitas*. Facets of his private life do, however, establish his worth as emperor.

Two of the primary concerns of the anonymous orator of VI (AD 310) are to justify Constantine's position as emperor and to account for the death of Maximian earlier in 310 without criticizing his addressee. Details of Constantine's private life facilitate each of these ambitions. As in VII, there are many references to Constantius in the speech (e.g. 4.5, 8.2); by his relationship with Constantine, this underscores the principle of dynastic succession. From his father Constantine inherited his looks, his dignity, calm, modesty and justice (4.4). On many occasions and in a variety of contexts, the orator mentions Constantine's *pietas* (e.g. 14.2, 20.1, 22.4) which, we can conclude, was also inherited from Constantius who is thrice given the epithet *Pius* (7.3, 8.2, 14.4). The observation that Constantine has inherited many of Constantius' personal qualities justifies his inheritance of power, *tua de memoria patris*

auctoritas, 'the authority which you derive from the memory of your father' (16.9). This combination of private and public is well illustrated by the orator's account of Constantine's accession on Constantius' death:

> purpuram statim tibi, cum primus copiam tui fecit egressus, milites utilitati publicae magis quam tuis adfectibus seruientes iniecere lacrimanti. (8.3)
>
> As soon as your arrival gave them opportunity, thinking more of the public good than of your own feelings, the soldiers threw the purple on you as you wept.

Through the private effects of his inherited *modestia* and *pietas* (8.6) Constantine is inclined to grieve his father's death and to refuse power (8.4); yet his *modestia* and *pietas* towards the state prevail. The consistency between the private and public realms is of great credit to him.

The orator does not glory in Constantine's victory over Maximian. His initial reaction to Maximian's death is to blame the fates (14.3), whereby he absolves not only Constantine but even Maximian himself of ultimate responsibility. Maximian is seen as over-ambitious and senile in mounting a challenge to Constantine (15.2). For his part, Constantine demonstrated singular *pietas* (20.1, 20.3) and *in pectore bonitas*, 'goodness in the breast' (20.2) in response, because he tried to avoid bloodshed and to pardon the aggressors. In doing this he forewent a victory which was assured by the loyalty inspired in his troops by his own example (16.3). Constantine's conduct throughout this civil war is entirely at one with the *pietas* and *modestia* which characterize his private life. This orator's decision to relate the personal qualities of the emperor directly to the *realpolitik* of power and war signals a break from the figurative employment of the emperors' private life in the previous panegyrics.

Speech V (AD 311 or 312) was delivered in Trier by an anonymous orator from Autun. It is a speech of thanks for the emperor's remission of taxes. His generosity is praised repeatedly (e.g. 2.3, 5.6, 9.2, 11.1, 12.1) and is related to his artless *bonitas*, 'goodness' (10.1). The tears Constantine shed on witnessing the neglected condition of the land of Autun are viewed as a sign of his *pietas* (7.1, 9.5–6) and the starting-point for his benefactions.[31] These few

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31 Mause 1994, 145.

details attest to belief in the importance of the relationship between personal morality and government, without referring closely to the emperor's private conduct.

The authors of the last two Constantinian panegyrics make more sustained and explicit use of private conduct. Both spoke after Constantine's defeat of Maxentius in 312, the anonymous author of Speech XII in 313 at Trier and Nazarius in Rome in 321 (IV). The key dynamic of the use of private conduct in XII is the distance it puts between Constantine and Maxentius. Constantine is not concerned for his own well-being (2.6–3.1), Maxentius utterly indulgent (16.4). Constantine is always active, never taking rest (2.3, 21.5), Maxentius listless (16.2). Constantine has inherited from his father dignity and *pietas* (4.1, 4.3), Maxentius was not the true son of Maximian (3.4, 4.3). Constantine is handsome (7.5, 19.6), Maxentius stunted and crippled (4.3). The orator juxtaposes other qualities in a sustained comparison:

> te, Constantine, paterna pietas sequebatur, illum, ut falso generi non inuideamus, impietas; te clementia, illum crudelitas; te pudicitia soli dicata coniugio, illum libido stupris omnibus contaminata; te diuina praecepta, illum superstitiosa maleficia; illum denique spoliatorum templorum, trucidati senatus, plebis Romanae fame necatae piacula, te abolitarum calumniarum, te prohibitarum delationum, te conseruati usque homicidarum sanguinis gratulatio. (4.4)

> Constantine, you were attended by your father's *pietas*, he, (so as not to begrudge him his false birth), by *impietas*; you by clemency, he by cruelty; you by modesty devoted to one wife, he by lust contaminated by every debauchery; you by divine commands, he by superstitious wrongs; finally, he by the guilt of robbing temples, slaughtering senators and starving the Roman people to death, you by the gratitude for the abolition of blackmail, for the outlawing of paid informants, and for saving the lives even of murderers.

The author progresses from private qualities to public actions. One stems from the other. Both when directly contrasted and when described in isolation, the evil of Maxentius and the virtue of Constantine put each other into sharper relief. Therefore, although the speech is a panegyric of Constantine, the excursus on the private conduct of Maxentius at 14.2–6 serves to enhance appreciation of the addressee's behaviour. By contrast, when comparing Constantine and Constantius, the orator does not draw upon the private conduct of either (25.2–3). As a result of this formulation, Constantine's success in the civil war against Maxentius is seen

not only as a military conquest but as a moral victory of good over evil.

A similar strategy of championing Constantine and condemning Maxentius by reference to their private conduct is adopted by Nazarius, whose panegyric also covers the clash of the two leaders in 312. Nazarius too interprets Constantine's success as the victory of right over wrong:

> illa igitur uis, illa maiestas fandi ac nefandi discriminatrix, quae omnia meritorum momenta perpendit librat examinat, illa pietatem tuam texit, illa nefariam illius tyranni fregit amentiam. (7.4)
>
> Therefore, that force—that majesty which discriminates between right and wrong, which weighs, measures and considers all examples of worthiness—protected your *pietas* and shattered the evil madness of that tyrant.

Constantine's *pietas* is frequently mentioned (e.g. 6.5, 10.2, 14.6, 16.1, 21.1, 26.3); his enemies are impious (7.1, 12.3) and wicked (6.5). Maxentius is a murderous, lustful thief (8.3), a man of evil (10.3) and insanity (12.1, 28.1). Rome under Maxentius' command was home to crime, perfidy, audacity, insolence, fury, cruelty, arrogance, haughtiness, luxury, and lust (31.3). Yet Constantine is not inimical towards him, but towards his vices (9.1–2); his clash was not with Maxentius' weapons but his faults (9.5). This juxtaposition of the ethical values of Constantine and Maxentius, which casts the leaders as virtuous and demonic respectively, constitutes a persuasive justification of Constantine's rise to power.[32] Constantine's right to rule is secured not by military supremacy but as a moral imperative.

In addition to providing a means of differentiating the two leaders, Constantine's private conduct is presented as exemplary. First he sets an example to his two sons (3.4–4.5, 36.3–37.3). Secondly, he acts as a model for his people. To achieve this he must be visible, and Nazarius makes a virtue of his accessibility (5.1–4, 34.4). The emperor wants all men to imitate his self-control (34.1–3) and has managed to calm the potentially riotous plebs (35.3). He inspires love in his sons (4.3), defeated people (21.3), Romans (34.4) and barbarians (38.3). As a further mark of his isolation, only Maxentius rejected his friendly offers (10.3–4). The examples set by Constantine are underwritten by his legislation:

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[32] Lassandro 1981.

novae leges regendis moribus et frangendis uitiis constitutae; ueterum calumniosae ambages recisae captandae simplicitatis laqueos perdiderunt. pudor tutus, munita coniugia. (38.4–5)

New laws have been introduced to guide morals and crush faults; the malicious quibblings of former times have been cut back and have lost their snares for entrapping honesty. Chastity is secure and marriage defended.

The *Theodosian Code* preserves many details of Constantine's moral legislation,[33] but Nazarius' observation here in the final chapter combines Constantine's personal desire to challenge vices with his inclination to encourage others to do the same.

The transition from the figurative employment of the emperors' private life in Tetrarchic and Dyarchic panegyric to a more direct attribution of personal qualities in the speeches to Constantine is not a recapitulation of the Trajanic model of emperor as *ciuis* (e.g. Pliny, *Panegyricus* 2.3). For although Constantine is praised for being accessible, he is not seen to mix with the people (cf. *Panegyricus* 24.3); although he sets an example to the people, he is not one of them (cf. *Panegyricus* 2.4). His private life is incorporated to present Constantine as a moral being and legitimate ruler; this provided an efficacious means of differentiating Constantine from the collegiate governments he ultimately replaced, and the rivals he defeated in the process.

Julian

A leap of over forty years takes us to 1 January 362 and to Claudius Mamertinus' public statement of thanks (*gratiarum actio*) for the consulship, delivered to Julian before the Senate in Constantinople. Julian had been sole Augustus since November 361, when Constantius II died while the two of them were preparing to meet in civil war. Mamertinus condenses Julian's military successes in Gaul (355–9) to one engagement, the Battle of Strasbourg (4.3); and his march east to confront Constantius is initially presented as a glorious campaign to defend the empire against barbarians (6.2), although Mamertinus later makes concessions to the reality of the civil discord (27.4). Julian's reputation at this stage was founded on his success in war, yet Mamertinus avoids making military

[33] Nixon and Rodgers 384.

supremacy the cornerstone of Julian's authority.[34] For usurpers, represented by Nepotianus and Silvanus, characteristically sought the throne through arms (13.2–3). Mamertinus' justification of Julian's rise to power, which itself negates any charge of usurpation, rests on his moral qualities.[35] These are elicited by explicit comparison with usurpers and implicit comparison with Constantius. Unlike the usurpers, Julian allows himself no indulgences of sleep, food or sex (13.3).[36] Former emperors were guilty of conspicuous expense (11.1–3, 19.4), but Julian eats very simply (11.4). In short, Julian enjoys none of the luxuries of a wealthy private life because he devotes all his time, energy and resources to the public good:

> nihil somno, nihil epulis, nihil otio tribuit; ipsa se naturalium necessariarumque rerum usurpatione defrudat; totus commodis publicis uacat. (14.3)
>
> He apportions nothing to sleep, banquets or leisure; he cheats himself of the exercise of the natural and necessary; he is completely available for the public good.

This combination of personal parsimony and generosity to the public (10.2) differentiates Julian from previous emperors:

> quidquid enim alii in cupiditates proprias prodigebant, id omne nunc in usus publicos reseruatur. (10.3)
>
> For whatever others used to lavish on their personal luxuries is all now saved for the public's benefit.

For Julian the throne is not a means for self-aggrandizement but a cause of self-sacrifice.

Admiration for his virtues inevitably inspires love for Julian in the citizens (5.4, 24.1–4). In turn Julian cultivates friendships without arrogance or dissimulation:

> prorsus amicitias tueris priuati fide, imperatoris opulentia. quae perpetuae et constantis beniuolentiae prima fiducia est, certissima uirtutum et maxime principis, ueritas. (26.1)
>
> Furthermore, you preserve friendships with the trust of a *priuatus* and the wealth of an emperor. Honesty is the foremost guarantee of everlasting and constant kindness, the surest of virtues, particularly in a leader.

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[34] Blockley 1972, 437, 448–9; Nixon and Rodgers 390–1.

[35] Blockley 1972, 437, 443.

[36] Many of Mamertinus' claims for Julian are corroborated by other authors, e.g. on sexual abstinence, Lib. *Or.* 18.128, 179, 281, Amm. Marc. 25.4.2; on frugal eating, Lib. *Or.* 13.29, 44, *Or.* 18.171, 175, Amm. Marc. 16.5.1–3, 25.4.4.

The consistency in his behaviour as *priuatus* and as *imperator* sets Julian apart from other emperors (26.2–4). As a friend Julian remains unchanged (26.5).

From this observation, Mamertinus moves to consider the mutability of character according to circumstances (27.1–2). Having made a virtue of Julian's consistency in his rise to power, Mamertinus surprises the audience with a volte-face:

> uidete num secundis rebus elatus aliquid de prioris uitae mansuetudine et moderatione mutauerit. mutauit, plane mutauit; nam ciuilior factus prosperorum infregit inuidiam. (27.3)

> See whether favourable circumstances have changed him in any way from the custom and moderation of his former lifestyle. He has changed, clearly he has changed; for by gaining in *ciuilitas* he has broken down jealousy of the wealthy.

The emperor's *ciuilitas* had not been praised in extant panegyric since Pliny. Like Trajan, Julian demonstrates *ciuilitas* in his attitude towards the Senate;[37] this is apparent when he walked out to meet the consuls (28–29.3).[38] Like Trajan, but unlike recent emperors (30.3), Julian mixed with crowds of citizens (30.2).[39] As in Pliny's *Panegyric*, claims for the emperor's *ciuilitas* are buttressed by details of his private life. Julian too acts as a model of behaviour to the citizens (4.3, 23.4). Fundamental to Mamertinus' eulogy of Julian's inclination to the ethics of the government of the Republic and early Principate, rather than that of his immediate predecessors, are his examples of Julian's private conduct.[40]

Valentinian I and Gratian

We leave the *Panegyrici Latini* briefly to consider panegyrics written by two of the fourth century's most eminent literati. Symmachus' *Orations* 1 (AD 369) and 2 (1 January 370) were addressed to Valentinian I, *Oration* 3 (AD 368/9) to Gratian.[41] Ausonius' *gratiarum actio* for the consulship of 379 was also addressed to Gratian.[42] All of

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[37] Scivoletto 1970, 24ff.; Wallace-Hadrill 1982, 48; Ratti 1996, 69–88.

[38] Cf. Amm. Marc. 22.7.1.

[39] On Julian's *ciuilitas*: Eutropius, *Breviarium* 10.16.3, Amm. Marc. 18.1.4, 22.5.3, 25.4.7; Blockley 1972, 444–5.

[40] E.g. 30.2–5. Nixon and Rodgers 432; Dvornik 1966, II 660ff.

[41] Ed. Pabst 1989.

[42] Ed. Green 1991, no. 21.

these speeches seem to have been delivered in Trier. Symmachus spent approximately a year away from Rome as part of a senatorial delegation to Valentinian. Although not a soldier himself, Symmachus witnessed Valentinian's campaigns and other military activity along the Rhine frontier. His panegyrics are fragmentary, but enough survives of each to render analysis of their subject-matter worthwhile.

Orations 1 and 2 are dominated by the emperor's military successes and 3 by the great promise of Gratian's reign. Details of the emperors' private lives rarely feature in sustained passages. In each the relationship between the emperors is celebrated, to assert the unity of government (e.g. 1.3, 12–13, 2.31, 3.10–11).[43] Valentinian has no opportunity for leisure, although his rule makes rest available to others. This lack of leisure differentiates him even from previous emperors such as Augustus and Marcus Aurelius (1.16). Indeed Valentinian's inclination to keep himself busy qualified him for office:

> priuatae hoc industriae tuae debes, quod te dignum reddidit principatu. (1.2)
>
> You owe this to your private industry, because it made you worthy of the throne.

This is the first of several occurrences of *priuatus* in the speech. The paradoxical nature of the *priuatus princeps* is most elaborate when Symmachus refers to the usurper Procopius. Valentinian viewed this man not as a public but private enemy (19).[44] In summary Symmachus says:

> tu in casibus tuis clemens, seuerus in publicis turpe existimas principi motus odii habere priuati. merito ergo a nobis amplius amaris, quia pro te minus irasceris. (20)
>
> Forgiving towards your own misfortunes but severe towards the state's, you consider it contemptible for an emperor to harbour impulses of private hatred. Therefore deservedly you are loved more by us, because you grow angry on your own account less.

A profusion of details of Valentinian's private life would weaken the force of Symmachus' claim that Valentinian subordinates his personal concerns and well-being to the national good.

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[43] Valens is curiously neglected in 2.

[44] Cf. Amm. Marc. 26.5.13.

According to Symmachus, both Valentinian and Gratian value letters, a claim which perhaps reflects the orator's preoccupations. Valentinian is said to have restored free speech (2.29) and Gratian himself is educated in literature. However, Symmachus does not allow Gratian uninterrupted leisure time:

> quas habes laboris indutias? tropaeis et litteris occupatus otiosa cum bellicis negotia miscuisti. agnosco in te non adumbrata uestigiis sed expressa ueterum signa uirtutum. (3.7)

> What break do you have from work? Occupied with victory spoils and books, you combined leisurely business with the affairs of war. I recognize in you the signs of ancient virtues, not outlined by footprints but firmly developed.

In the rhetorical flourish *otiosa negotia*, 'leisurely business', Symmachus sees united in Gratian the attributes of an educated man and the energy of a successful general.[45]

The man responsible for Gratian's education was Symmachus' great friend Ausonius. Their friendship flourished after their meeting in 369, by which time Ausonius was Gratian's tutor.[46] Ten years later, Ausonius delivered his panegyric to his pupil–emperor, a *gratiarum actio* for the consulship. Military affairs feature very little in the speech.[47] Instead Ausonius concentrates on his own role as consul and Gratian's homely virtues.

Ausonius is unique as a panegyrist in the space he devotes to his own private life. He boasts of:

> patriam non obscuram, familiam non paenitendam, domum innocentem, innocentiam non coactam, angustas opes, uerumtamen libris et litteris dilatatas, frugalitatem sine sordibus, ingenium liberale, animum non illiberalem, uictum uestitum supellectilem munda, non splendida. (36)

> A well-known homeland, a respectable family, a home without guilt, an innocence which was not forced, meagre resources (although extended by books and letters), restraint without vulgarity, a liberal intellect and open mind, and diet, wardrobe and goods neat but not showy.

Ostensibly the details justify Ausonius' elevation to the consulship, but the tone of the passage is conspicuously immodest.[48]

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[45] Cf. *Epitome de Caesaribus* 47.4.
[46] Sivan 1993, 97–141.
[47] Cf. 6–9; Sivan 1993, 122.
[48] On Ausonius' vanity see Green 1991, 538.

This self-esteem is often no less apparent when Gratian is the focus. Ausonius quotes the words Gratian used to appoint him to the consulship and praises their literary merits. He speaks of Gratian's educated voice (46) and asks *quis haec uerba te docuit?* 'who taught you these terms?' (49), yet refers to himself as Gratian's *praeceptor*, 'teacher' (7, 30).[49] If the letter of appointment were pubished widely, statues of Ausonius would be erected (50). Ausonius later claims that he is avoiding praise of Gratian's oratorical skills for fear of being accused of self-flattery, but the claim is empty, appearing when it does (68). We are left with an unmistakable sense that Gratian owes his excellent oratorical ability to Ausonius' tuition.

A gap is usually preserved between the emperor and *priuatus* in the speech (1, 28), but Ausonius uses the term of his own relationship with Gratian. After one of his many word-plays on Gratian and *grates*, 'thanks', he adds:

> patitur enim humanitas tua, ut praeter regias uirtutes priuata appellatione lauderis. (24)
>
> For your kindness permits that, setting aside your royal virtues, you be praised by this *privatus* name.[50]

The paradoxical use of *priuatus* here in relation to the *princeps* accentuates the closeness between Gratian and Ausonius. Again the consul gives a clear sense of his own standing.

When Ausonius moves to praise Gratian's virtues more directly, he warns that he will deal with *cotidiana*, 'daily matters', leaving aside loftier qualities (62). The catalogue of everyday virtues includes religious conviction (63), restraint in dress (64), athletic prowess and horsemanship (64–5), frugality at table and sexual probity (66), and modesty towards friends (67). Ausonius concludes:

> ego ista perstrinxi atque, ut sciunt omnes, possum uideri familiaris notitiae secretus interpres domestica istaec non tam praedicare quam prodere. (70)
>
> I have covered these domestic virtues sketchily and, as everyone knows, as a secret informant about my familiar acquaintance, I can seem less to be praising them than revealing them.

The fact that Ausonius deals only briefly with Gratian's military record need not be attributed to the young emperor's lack of

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[49] See *docui* (24) and *imperator doctissime* (27).
[50] Cf. *laude priuata* (27).

experience of war—in 291 Mamertinus made military success a key theme despite Maximian's recent signal failure to recapture Britain from the usurper Carausius. A more compelling reason is that by praising Gratian's *cotidiana* Ausonius can publicize his own familiarity with the emperor, just as he did his own teaching skills by eulogizing Gratian's literary qualities. Many facets of Ausonius' private life can be seen in Gratian's too; by sidelining military affairs and championing Gratian's private virtues, for some of which Ausonius demands direct credit, the speech is almost as much a commendation of its author as it is of the emperor.

Theodosius

After his father's execution in 376, Theodosius had retired from his hitherto successful military career to live in his native Spain. He was made Augustus by Gratian in 379. This succession of events presented to Latinus Pacatus Drepanius, the author of Speech II (AD 389), the opportunity to consider Theodosius as *priuatus* and *princeps*:

> enimuero illa futurum principem comens idcirco paulisper uoluit esse priuatum, ut quia iam ad plenum bellicis artibus abundabas, usus ciuilis experiens sub otii tempore reddereris. (9.2)
>
> For in preparing a future *princeps*, [fortune] therefore wanted you to be *priuatus* for a while, so that because at the time you were overflowing with military skills, you would be returned after a period of leisure experienced in civilian affairs.

As Pliny had done nearly three hundred years earlier, Pacatus maintains the distinction between *priuatus* and *princeps* only to combine them elsewhere:[51]

> quid tua intererat te principem fieri, qui futurus eras in imperatore priuatus? (12.5)
>
> What did it matter to you to become *princeps*, you who were going to be *priuatus* when emperor?

In his choice of friends and the value he attached to *amicitia*, 'friendship', in general, Theodosius is praised for the consistency of his ethical standards when *princeps* and *priuatus* (16.1–2). Pacatus'

[51] See also 27.1–2; Beranger 1982–3, 40.

delight in the rhetorical and ideological potential of the *priuatus princeps* paradox matches Pliny's.[52]

In a parody of the excesses of court ceremonial, which Theodosius curtailed (13.2), the emperor is said to have enthroned *Amicitia*, as Julian had *Philosophia* (*Pan. Lat.* III.23.4), clothed in purple and decked in gold and jewels (16.2). This parody sharpens appreciation of Theodosius' modest tastes; he lives sparingly and contentedly, his diet is simple (13.3), his private life is just like his public, notable for its rigour, faithfulness, moderation, and affability (20.5–6). Theodosius is set apart from previous emperors, whose tastes were extravagent, and his conduct is an example for all to follow (13–14). Again the ethic owes much to Pliny, but also to Nazarius.

Pacatus inherits his attitude towards the emperor's leisure time from the panegyrist of Maximian. Although *otium* is used of Theodosius' years in retirement (9.2), it is of an extraordinary nature. Theodosius spent no time on beaches or in seasonal retreats but devoted his *otium* to increasing his means and good reputation (9.3). His reign is characterized by endless activity (10.1), in preparation for which, as a general, he had never felt able to break for *otium* (10.3). As in the case of Maximian (*Pan. Lat.* XI.3.1–2), the emperor's lack of *otium* is linked to the divine realm of perpetual motion (10.1).

A further usage of the details of private lives which Pacatus adopted from earlier works is the condemnation of usurpers. Magnus Maximus had proclaimed himself emperor in Trier in 383 and was killed in 388. To what extent Pacatus, who seems to have come from Bordeaux, and his circle had supported Maximus' regime is unknown, but the usurper is fiercely censured in the speech. In his account of Gaul under Maximus, Pacatus mentions the usurper's savagery, lust, cruelty, avarice (24.6), and avidity (25.7). His blood and followers are impious (34.2, 42.3), as Pacatus designates Theodosius' ultimate victory as much moral as military. The private lives and values of Theodosius and Maximus are compared in an extended passage:

> postremo tecum fidem, secum perfidiam; tecum fas, secum nefas; tecum ius, secum iniuriam; tecum clementiam pudicitiam religionem, secum impietatem libidinem crudelitatem. (31.3)

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52 Beranger 1982–3, 22.

> [Would Maximus not have realized that] in the end you had loyalty, he treachery; you right, he wrong; you law, he injustice; you clemency, modesty and faith, he impiety, lust and cruelty.

The style of the passage goes back to Pliny, but the technique of differentiating an emperor from rivals by scrutinizing their personal conduct is reminiscent of Mamertinus' comparison of Julian with Nepotianus and Silvanus (*Pan. Lat.* III.13.3) and Nazarius' presentation of Constantine and Maxentius.[53] Thus Pacatus included in his own, lengthy speech, many of the different methods which earlier panegyrists had employed in working to their own advantage details of private lives.

Pacatus is widely held to be the editor of the *XII Panegyrici Latini.* This belief is founded on the speech's position in the corpus—second to Pliny's *Panegyricus*—and the number of borrowings and adaptations Pacatus made from the other panegyrics in the collection. This argument is supported by analysis of Pacatus' use of private conduct.

Conclusion

In this corpus of scattered but associated texts, the private lives of public figures feature in varying degrees and to different effects. Many act as examples to the Roman people.[54] The private conduct of some, notably Trajan and Julian, underpins their *ciuilitas.* Through their private lives, Theodosius and Constantine are presented as superior to their rivals. The unity of the Dyarchy, Tetrarchy and collegiate rule of Valentinian and family is confirmed by the emperors' close personal relationships. In a variety of ways, private conduct is used to claim moral superiority for the subject. In no sense do these texts suggest a linear progression in the ethics of the self;[55] the fluctuations are due to the orators' control of literary conventions in response to political exigencies rather than to broader, societal change. Thus, for example, many later writers rework the language and topics of Pliny's *Panegyric* to suit their own circumstances; the panegyrists of the Dyarchs and Tetrarchs employ a figurative approach to private conduct (perhaps because

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[53] Mause 1994, 130.
[54] Id. 151.
[55] Foucault 1990, 39–95.

they have no clear information about their addressees or what they do have is unsuitable); and both Eumenius and Ausonius manipulate their addressee's posited private interests to promote their own agendas. In every panegyric, the orator has to reconcile several factors: his personal needs, such as an ambition for promotion or a clear statement of his own relationship with the emperor; those of his addressee, such as approval of his reign and endorsement of his policies; and finally those of the wider audience, who might want tax concessions, more visits from the emperor, barbarian threats quashed, or any number of other services. Such agendas are all variable, and would require tactful balancing. The genre's publication of aspects of the emperor's private life could facilitate this delicate operation.[56]

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THE PAGAN INHERITANCE

CHAPTER FOUR

IN PRAISE OF AN EMPRESS: JULIAN'S *SPEECH OF THANKS* TO EUSEBIA

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Introduction

This paper will focus on a panegyric from the fourth century which recommends itself to this volume on several counts. The text in question is Julian's *Speech of Thanks* to the Empress Eusebia, so the object of praise is female, a matter of interest in itself. Further the panegyrist in this case is not an anonymous orator but a prominent figure, about whose political and intellectual circumstances we are well informed. This oration also tends to be neglected in comparison with the two which Julian wrote on the Emperor Constantius II (AD 337–61),[1] and when it is read it is often taken at face value. In fact it rewards deeper analysis. It feeds into the discourse of a crucial period in Julian's life, when he had been appointed to the position of Caesar in Gaul, and it also reflects on him as writer. We receive from this text both a reflection of Julian's political situation and an impression of his intellectual concerns. Above all though, Julian has left us with a powerful self-image. To emphasize these various aspects, the panegyric will be examined under the headings of context and text, structure, character as a panegyric, themes and distinctive features, before a final assessment of the text and its import is presented.

Context and text

The oration on Eusebia forms a trio with Julian's two orations on Constantius. These three orations all date to a particular watershed

[1] An exception is Aujoulat 1983a.

in Julian's life, his term as Caesar in Gaul (AD 355–61). Julian's relations with the imperial couple and the events that led to this momentous period require some elucidation before the texts can be appreciated. Julian is renowned as the last pagan Roman emperor (AD 361–3), but he was also the last imperial representative of the family of Constantine the Great, the Flavian dynasty.[2] Julian's father Julius Constantius was the half-brother of Constantine the Great; they shared the same father (Constantius I) but had different mothers (respectively Theodora and Helena). Julian was born in 331/2[3] in Constantinople, and not long after his birth his mother Basilina died. Further deaths marked his early life, for the demise of Constantine the Great in 337 was followed by a massacre in Constantinople, in which nearly all the male relatives of Constantine the Great except his three sons Constantine, Constantius and Constans, were killed by the soldiery. The motive for this massacre was said to be that the soldiers wanted to be ruled only by Constantine the Great's sons, but suspicion fell on the sons themselves, particularly Constantius. In the massacre Julian's father was killed; the only survivors appear to have been Julian and his half-brother Gallus, who were probably felt to be too young to present a political threat.

From this point on Julian felt the controlling hand of his cousin Constantius upon his life, and probably in 342[4] he was installed with Gallus on the estate of Macellum in Cappadocia, where they remained for six years. When they were released from here Gallus went to live at court, whilst Julian pursued his education. When Constantius became sole emperor on the death of his brother Constans in 350 he was faced with the difficulty of establishing sole power and of being on two frontiers at once. Thus in 351 he decided to make Gallus his Caesar. Gallus was sent east and resided in Antioch. Constantius was now free to deal with the western rebel Magnentius, whom he defeated in 353; around this time the emperor also married Eusebia. Soon, however, Constantius's eastern colleague Gallus fell into imperial disfavour, and after being recalled from Antioch he was executed in 354. In the aftermath of

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[2] For a good account of the life and reign of Julian see Bowersock 1978. See also Athanassiadi 1992, Bidez 1930, Browning 1975, *PLRE* I 477–8.

[3] The date is not certain, despite the entry in *PLRE*: see J. Bouffartigue, *L'Empereur Julien et la culture de son temps* (Paris, 1992) 30.

[4] See Bouffartigue (n.3) 29–39.

the execution Julian was himself summoned to court at Milan, under suspicion due to his connection with Gallus. Through the influence of the Empress Eusebia[5] he was reconciled with Constantius, and found himself sent to reside in Athens where he attended the university. However, he was soon recalled to court and with the encouragement of Eusebia he accepted the 'offer' of the position of Caesar, an offer that was said to have been supported by the empress herself.[6] Julian's elevation occurred on 6 November 355, thus ending his life as a student and beginning his political and imperial career. Julian found himself posted to Gaul with a wife (Helena, the sister of Constantius) and a gift of books. It was in Gaul that Julian wrote the three imperial orations, and these constitute evidence for Julian's relations with the imperial court in this period.

The *First Panegyric* on Constantius has been dated to early 356,[7] and is characterized as having had a diplomatic purpose—designed to reassure Constantius of his Caesar's loyalty and goodwill.[8] It is assumed that the work was at least sent to Constantius, if not performed before him.[9] In terms of rhetoric it is asserted that the *First Panegyric* closely follows the rules set out in the treatise attributed to Menander Rhetor, composed during the reign of Diocletian;[10] Athanassiadi even opines that Julian 'follows so faithfully the model of the βασιλικὸς λόγος established by Menander' that it resulted in a work of 'studied unoriginality'.[11] Indeed Julian starts

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5 This is related not only in the oration under discussion but in Ammianus 15.2.8.: 'Julian ... would have perished ... had not the Empress Eusebia ... taken his part', trans. W. Hamilton (Harmondsworth, 1986) 67.

6 This is related also in Ammianus 15.8.3. In Zosimus's version of events (3.1.2–3) Eusebia is the very proponent of the plan to make Julian Caesar. On the nature of the relationship between Julian and Eusebia see Aujoulat 1983a and 1983b. I intend to return to this issue elsewhere.

7 For this date see Bowersock 1978, 37, who stresses the fact that Cologne was recaptured in 356 not 357 as had been believed. A date of winter 356–7 is proposed by Bidez (1930, 379 n.7) and Athanassiadi (1992, 61), but this seems too late, since the panegyric indicates that Julian has engaged as Caesar in a joint campaign with Constantius but has undertaken no campaign of his own: *Or.* 1.45b. Averil Cameron, *The Later Roman Empire* (London, 1993, 89) follows the date of 356.

8 See, for example, Bowersock 1978, 37; Athanassiadi 1992, 60–1; Cameron (n.7) 89.

9 See, for example, Bowersock 1978, 37; Athanassiadi 1992, 61; Browning 1975, 74.

10 See, for instance, Bowersock 1978, 37; Browning 1975, 75. For Menander's date see Russell and Wilson xl.

11 Athanassiadi 1992, 61 and 62. See, however, the qualifying remarks of

with a *prooemium* and moves on to native land and ancestry as suggested by Menander's formula. He is aware that birth is a topic that is usually addressed. He acknowledges that the narration of the deeds of the emperor is what is expected. He is conscious of the primacy of the four cardinal virtues of courage, justice, temperance and wisdom. However, Julian also avows that his panegyric will be different from the norm; he says it will be 'more after my own fashion' (3c).[12] Indeed Julian focuses exclusively on the wartime deeds of the emperor, though these are not discussed under the virtues of courage and wisdom; peacetime deeds are not considered as a defined issue; temperance and wisdom are very lightly touched on, whilst justice is ignored as a separate subject. These factors suggest that this panegyric is less straightforward than has been assumed.

The *Second Panegyric* on Constantius belongs to a later moment, generally thought to be the summer of 358,[13] not long after Julian's victory over the Alamanni at the battle of Strasbourg in 357, the glory for which had been appropriated by Constantius. This was a tenser time than 356; Julian was coming into his own as a general and administrator, and found himself being slandered at court, most notably by Marcellus, the dismissed master of cavalry.[14] The *Second Panegyric* is thus characterized as a diplomatic piece also, a response to this awkward situation.[15] It is a work divided into two parts; the first exalts the great deeds of Constantius, the second demonstrates that the emperor realizes the ideal of the philosopher-king.[16] However it has also been stressed, particularly by Athanassiadi (now echoed by Curta), that this panegyric is as much an expression of Julian's own preoccupations as a celebration of Constantius's heroic deeds.[17] Athanassiadi notes the 'auto-panegyrical flavour' of the work, as well as the promotion of Platonic ideas

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Curta 1995, 189.

[12] Translations from Julian's speeches are from W.C. Wright's Loeb I (London and New York, 1913, repr. 1980).

[13] For this date see Bowersock 1978, 43; Bidez (1932, 108–9) also discusses the date. However Curta (1995, 196) proposes a later date of March–October 359.

[14] See Ammianus 16.7.1–3.

[15] See, for instance, Browning 1975, 97.

[16] See Bidez 1932, 109–10.

[17] Athanassiadi 1992, 63–6; Curta 1995. See also the remarks of Bidez (1932, 112–15) and Bowersock (1978, 44: 'it looks very much as if Julian's deep concerns had been unconsciously revealed').

which 'were far from being popular in Constantius' circle'. She also asserts that Julian makes 'no secret of his religious beliefs' in the work. Ultimately she characterizes Julian's *Second Panegyric* as 'an extraordinary piece of propaganda for his own cause', a 'panegyric of his own deeds' which Julian just happened to send to Constantius; Julian was now after all 'a general, an administrator and a political thinker, while birth had made of him the second most powerful individual in the empire. He was going to tell his cousin all that'. Certainly reference to the tension between Achilles and Agamemnon at the start of the speech is suggestive of the situation between Julian and Constantius. However, despite the identification of these elements within the *Second Panegyric*, it is generally accepted that the speech was sent to court.[18]

The *Speech of Thanks* praising Eusebia has been closely linked with the *First Panegyric* on Constantius, for they are believed to have been written in close proximity if not at the same time.[19] It has been noted that Eusebia is not referred to in the *First Panegyric* though Menander advises inclusion of the empress in a *basilikos logos*;[20] it is thus tempting to see these two panegyrics as forming a diptych.[21] The work is thought to have been sent to court if not performed there;[22] Aujoulat imagines the suspicious Constantius reading the speech on his wife.[23] An alternative is that the speech was not meant for consumption at court, that it was for consumption in

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18 Note, however, the doubts of Wright, as referred to by Bidez 1932, 115. Despite identifying anti-Constantius elements in the panegyric and arguing that Julian's intended addressee was his audience rather than the emperor, Curta (1995, 210 n.112) maintains that the speech was performed, but does not consider the reaction of Constantius to the panegyric.

19 Bowersock (1978, 34) suggests a date of 356; Bidez (1932, 71) accepts a date of winter 356/7. Athanassiadi (1992, 61) asserts that it was composed around the same time as the *First Panegyric* commenting, 'certainly the last touches were not put to it earlier than June 357, as the concluding passage refers critically to the imperial visit to Rome'. However, the visit to Rome is certainly not that of 357, for, as Julian makes clear, the visit he refers to is one that Eusebia made without Constantius who was on campaign over the Rhine (129c). *PLRE* I 300 dates the Roman visit to 'probably ... 354'. Thus the reference to the visit to Rome may not be of great assistance in dating the text. The *Speech of Thanks* was certainly written after Julian had experienced campaigning in Gaul (124d).

20 Men. Rhet. 376.9–13. On this point see Bidez 1932, 71.

21 Though the Homeric parallels link *Or.* 3 thematically rather with *Or.* 2.

22 See, for example, Athanassiadi 1992, 61.

23 Aujoulat 1983a, 97.

Gaul, either for Constantius's administrative élite there[24] or alternatively for Julian's own small group of sympathizers;[25] such a Gallic audience might be implied by Julian's comment that even a small audience is worth addressing (104a). Again the speech is characterized as an expression of loyalty and goodwill to the imperial regime. However, both the style and the tone of the piece are believed to differ from the *First Panegyric*; the style is characterized as being simpler and the tone more spontaneous and more sincere. Athanassiadi describes the speech as being 'infinitely more straightforward',[26] whilst Bidez asserts that Julian 'parle à coeur ouvert'[27] and that he writes with a naturalness and an abandon that is absent from the *First Panegyric*.[28] Even Aujoulat, who is the most critical commentator on the speech and who is cautious in reading its portrayal of Eusebia, adheres to the notion that Julian praised his benefactress with more sincerity than he had Constantius.[29] Certainly the theme of the work is more direct, for it is not a full-blown imperial panegyric, but a speech commemorating Eusebia's good deeds towards Julian for which he is offering repayment in literary form. Julian himself states that the purpose of his encomium was to immortalize the benefactions of Eusebia.[30] Thus the work is a focused speech of thanks[31] that takes the framework of a panegyric. The text, together with Julian's *Letter to the Athenians* of 361 and the account of the historian Ammianus Marcellinus, serves as a major source both for the events of Julian's life in 354–5 and of Eusebia's role within them.

Structure

By choosing to write in praise of Eusebia Julian had set himself a literary challenge; Browning points out that 'the handbooks of rhetoric gave no rules for encomiums on women', and notes that

[24] This target audience was suggested to me by Peter Heather.
[25] See Curta 1995, 197 for interesting reflections on the intended audience of the *Second Panegyric*.
[26] Athanassiadi 1992, 62.
[27] Bidez 1930, 146.
[28] Bidez 1932, 72.
[29] Aujoulat 1983a, 102.
[30] *Or.* 3.117c.
[31] For the *gratiarum actio* see L. Pernot, *La Rhétorique de l'éloge dans le monde gréco-romain I: Histoire et technique* (Paris, 1993) 108–9.

Julian had 'to adapt the standard pattern' to deal with the subject he had chosen.[32] We shall indeed see that there are many familiar elements in the encomium when it is compared to the handbook of Menander Rhetor. There may have been extant speeches in praise of previous imperial women (though I know of none) that Julian could have drawn upon, but, as the Caesar himself says, the precise model for his speech is Athene's praise of Arete in Homer's *Odyssey*. Julian describes Athene as being 'like some orator perfect in the art of rhetoric' (105a). He details the contents of Athene's encomium and states that he will arrange his in the same manner 'making mention, as is natural, of her native land, her ancestors, how she married and whom, and all the rest in the same fashion as Homer' (106b). Athene's praise of Arete is found in Book Seven of the *Odyssey*.[33] Athene, disguised as a young maiden, appears to Odysseus as he is about to enter the city of the Phaeacians, and guides him to the palace of king Alcinous. She tells him that the first person he will meet is the queen, Arete, whom she proceeds to praise. She describes the ancestry of Arete, her marriage and relationship with her husband, and also her relationship with her children and the people. Then particular qualities of Arete are selected for praise—she has 'good understanding, and settles the quarrels of those to whom she has goodwill, even if they are men' (73f.). Athene concludes by telling Odysseus, 'If in her sight you win favour, then there is hope that you will see your own people, and will return to your high-roofed house and to your native land' (75–7). This praise occupies 21 lines, so is hardly elaborate, but still provides the basic framework for Julian's speech.

Julian's own text consists of 985 lines in the Loeb edition of the speech, and is divided into six sections, as follows:

1. *Introduction* (102a–6b)
2. *Native land* (106c–7d)
3. *Noble birth* (108a–9a)
4. *Marriage* (109b–12a)
5. *Deeds* (112b–26b)
6. *Epilogue* (126b–30a)

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[32] Browning 1975, 75.

[33] Homer, *Odyssey* 7.53–74, trans. A.T. Murray, rev. G.E. Dimock, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, 1995) I 250–1.

The *Introduction* focuses on the subject of the repayment of kindnesses and describes Julian's specific intent to compose a tribute of praise to the empress in order to repay her benefactions to him. Under *Native land* Julian tackles the subject of Macedonia, concentrating in particular on the achievements of Philip and Alexander. He concludes this section with a brief reference to Eusebia's home city Thessalonica, which he describes as 'the most important place in Macedonia' (107d). In the section on *Noble birth* Julian is content to mention the case of Eusebia's father, who was the first member of the family to become a consul. On the topic of *Marriage* Julian portrays Constantius's choice of Eusebia as revealing 'of her native nobility ... wit and wisdom, a body in the flower of youth, and beauty'. An account of Eusebia's *Deeds* forms the core of the speech. Julian asserts that he cannot describe all of them, and instead concentrates on those that displayed her virtues. Eusebia is said to have won her husband's devotion, to have influenced him to greater mercy, and to have secured honour and office for 'countless persons'. Julian cites specific cases of this latter activity of the empress, of which his own case forms the major example (116d–26b). Finally the *Epilogue* reflects generally on the speech and its subject matter.

When compared with Athene's praise of Arete it is clear that Julian's structure and subject are indeed close to his model, but his assertion that Homer praises Arete's native land is not accurate. Further he cannot describe Eusebia's relationship with her children, as she has none, and he either interprets 'people' as including the 'Senate', or simply interpolates this body. But the context of Homer's speech has striking parallels with Julian's own situation; in 354 and 355 Julian was suffering like Odysseus, yearning to return home, and found benefaction from an intelligent woman who could resolve conflict even between men. It can be imagined that all this no doubt struck Julian too, and recommended the model of the praise of Arete.[34]

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[34] Although little is made of Alcinous, the Eusebia–Arete analogy carries with it an implicit analogy between Constantius and Alcinous.

Character as a panegyric

It is clear that Julian's *Speech of Thanks* to Eusebia is encomiastic, both from the language in which he himself describes it, and from the topics into which he divides the speech and the techniques he uses. Throughout the speech Julian constantly refers to the work as an encomium.[35] The contents of the speech confirm that Julian is indeed writing a panegyric, as he arranges his discussion under Menandrean topics. Whilst several of these subjects were present in Homer's praise of Arete it is likely that Julian has been equally influenced by the specific conventions for an independent rhetorical panegyric: hence the addition of the Introduction, the section on Native land and the Epilogue. The subject of Marriage is the obvious borrowing from the Homeric model, but this may have been a typical feature in the praise of a woman anyway; certainly it is a crucial aspect of the role and influence of both Arete and Eusebia. The high concentration on the virtue of Eusebia also recalls Menander's advice that an emperor's deeds should be classified by the four virtues of courage, justice, temperance and wisdom. Julian ascribes to her all of these except courage, and praises in addition her mildness, clemency, philanthropy and liberality, virtues which were, of course, equally applicable to emperors. It is Eusebia's virtue that makes her a match for Constantius (114b–c). The choice of the model of Homer's praise of Arete (whose name means Virtue) adds to this emphasis on virtue, though whether the model inspired the emphasis on virtue or was inspired by it is another matter.[36]

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[35] In his introduction he discusses the worth of praise, cites distinguished practitioners of the art, and notes that women have received praise too; inspired by Homer, Julian intends to praise the noble Eusebia, as he is eager 'to compose an encomium worthy of her' (106a); he asserts that he is writing a special encomium on Eusebia (110b); he avoids listing the circumstances of those to whom the empress showed mercy, 'lest I should seem ... to be composing not so much an encomium of her good deeds as a catalogue of the misfortunes of others', yet he has to cite some proof, for not to do so is 'to imply that they are lacking, and brings discredit on my encomium' (115d–16a); he reprimands himself for digressing into a panegyric on philosophy rather than sticking to the subject of his panegyric, Eusebia (119d–20b); and in his epilogue he asserts that Eusebia's goodwill to all is 'the sum and substance of my whole encomium' (129b).

[36] The stress on virtue echoes that in Julian's *First Panegyric* on Constantius (for instance *Or.* 1.5a–b), but was standard enough: see Libanius, *Or.* 59.166; Themistius, *Or.* 1.5a.

The device of *synkrisis* (comparison), so familiar from panegyric and recommended by Menander, is also in evidence, though Julian's palette seems somewhat limited. Apart from the implicit analogy with Arete, Eusebia is compared only with Odysseus's wife, Penelope; the two women are praised for the devotion they inspired in their husbands (112d). A parallel is also drawn between Penelope and Eusebia because through their virtue they secured benefits for both individuals and mankind (128b). Further *synkrisis* occurs when Julian considers Eusebia's mother; she is compared with Evadne and Laodamia of Thessaly due to her virtue of temperance, and she is superior to Penelope as no suitors approached her once she was a widow (110b–c).

Also typical is the denial of the rhetor's ability, a stance recommended by Menander. Julian opines in his introduction that his attempt to describe such great deeds of Eusebia will be inadequate (106a), and in his epilogue he comments, 'it may be that you have listened without enjoyment to what has been said ... seeing that the speaker is a layman and entirely ignorant of rhetoric' (126b). At one point Julian imagines himself being reprimanded by an expert rhetor for having strayed from his path by digressing on the study of philosophy in Greece (119d–20a).[37] Linked with this denial of ability is the assertion of the truth of what the rhetor is saying; Julian states that he 'knows neither how to invent nor how to use the writer's craft, but speaks the truth as it occurs to him' (126b). This too is a standard assertion.[38]

Julian's consciousness of panegyric and its form is also reflected in other elements of the speech. For instance he presents a mini-panegyric on Eusebia's mother (110b–c) in his section on marriage. Also striking is his praise of Constantius. The emperor is described as brave, temperate, wise, just (the four essential imperial virtues), and also as good, mild, high-souled, noble and godlike.[39] Particularly striking is Julian's elaborately extended metaphor on the emperor as a skilled charioteer (122a–d). Further, Julian's 'digressions' on philosophy in Greece and the educational benefits of books are described by himself as panegyrics.

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[37] This common denial of ability is also used by Julian in the *First Panegyric*, *Or.* 1.2a. See also Libanius, *Or.* 59.5–7.

[38] Also found in Julian's *First Panegyric*, *Or.* 1.23a. See also Libanius, *Or.* 59.23–5; Themistius, *Or.* 1.3c–d.

[39] *Or.* 3.109b, 114b–c, 123a.

Themes

Julian's speech is characterized by recurring themes. The most prominent of these, and the least surprising, is women. Julian had set himself an unusual task in praising a woman, and claims to feel a certain apprehension in approaching it. His introduction centres on a discussion of the appropriateness of repaying kindness, and he shows concern about whether one should praise a woman and indeed receive benefits from a woman. Julian is concerned by the accusation of flattery, but also by the gender of the benefactor and the appropriateness of thanking a female benefactor. He comments, 'Shall we consent to accept kind treatment from a woman no less than from a man, and to obtain some boon whether small or great, and then hesitate to pay the thanks due therefor? But perhaps people will say that the very act of making a request to a woman is despicable and unworthy of an honourable and high-spirited man, and that even the wise Odysseus was spiritless and cowardly because he was suppliant to the king's daughter [Nausicaa]' (104d). Julian however justifies his praise of Eusebia in both instances by citing Homer.

In his epilogue Julian also addresses the theme of women, discussing the type of woman who deserves praise. Imagining that he will be criticized for the lack of magnitude of the deeds of Eusebia which he praises, he gives examples of women who have qualified for praise under this category in the past. He alludes to Semiramis, and cites Nitocris and Rhodogune and Tomyris 'and a crowd of women beyond number who played men's parts' (127b). Thus Julian indicates that women tended to be praised only if they had achieved or contributed to sizeable deeds, such as warfare, and could in some sense be categorized as honorary men. His further reference to the Amazon (127d) reinforces this impression. To justify his choice of Eusebia as praiseworthy Julian poses the following question to the orators who have praised women who brought about deeds of magnitude: would they rather have a wife or daughter of the sort that they celebrate, or one like Penelope? Again Julian has recourse to the example of Homer. He notes that the poet praised Penelope rather than other women since 'by reason of her virtue and discretion many blessings have been gained for mankind, both for individuals and for the common weal, whereas from those others there has arisen no benefit whatever,

but incurable calamities' (128b); just as Homer decided it was 'better and more just to praise Penelope', so Julian praises Eusebia. Such reflections take us to the heart of the attitude of Roman males to females within their society. Women could become worthy of praise by being categorized as men, or alternatively they could be praised as the good wife, subservient to men. It is notable that the one virtue that Eusebia does not possess in Julian's speech is that of courage; this was an inherently masculine virtue since it was the virtue by which wartime deeds were categorized, according to Menander.

Indeed, although the speech is often taken as evidence of Eusebia's influence over Constantius, it is clear that Julian never loses sight of the primacy of the emperor. It was the fact that Constantius married Eusebia that brought her to prominence, and his virtues are as important as hers (109b–10d); Eusebia may persuade her husband to be more merciful, but it is the emperor who has the authority to exercise such mercy (114c–15b); it is the winning of the emperor's friendship by Eusebia for her 'family and kinsfolk' that assists them, not Eusebia herself (116b). The hierarchy in Julian's comment that 'I already possess, by the grace of God and the emperor, and because the empress too was zealous in my behalf, all those blessings' (117a) is highly indicative (though scarcely surprising), as is his confession that 'I prayed first, as is meet, for the emperor, and next for Eusebia, that God would grant them many blessings' (118c–d). It is Eusebia who intercedes on Julian's behalf, but it is the emperor who has the power of decision.[40] Julian is thus very much aware of social reality—a woman may deserve praise but it is men who matter (or who should be seen to matter)—and he is also an exponent of the conventional views of his society.[41]

His defence of his decision not to describe the fabulous bridal cavalcade when Eusebia and her mother travelled to Constantius's

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40 For example, *Or.* 3.118b–c.

41 Julian's supposed indifference to women is infamous. N. Radošević ('The Division of Rule in the Greek *Basilikoi Logoi* from the Fourth Century', *Zbornik Radova Vizantološkog Instituta* 34 (1995) 18–20 at 20) goes so far as to call him 'the notorious misogynist'. However C. Head, 'Women in the Life and Writings of the Emperor Julian,' *Byzantina* 11 (1982) 9–20 subscribes to a rosier, and diametrically opposed, interpretation, and asserts that Julian 'seems ... to have felt warmly towards womankind'. Aujoulat (1983a, 85–6) argues that Julian was susceptible to the physical beauty of the Empress Eusebia.

court is particularly revealing. He asserts that a desire for such description in his audience would be childish, and to illustrate this point he conjures up another situation for comparative purposes. He says, 'if someone were to choose the best [musician], and were to clothe him in the raiment suited to his art, and were then to bring him into a theatre full of men, women and children of all sorts, varying in temperament and age and habits besides, do you not suppose that the children and those of the men and women who had childish tastes would gaze at his dress and his lyre, and be marvellously smitten with his appearance, while the more ignorant of the men, and the *whole crowd of women*, except a very few, would judge his playing simply by the criterion of pleasure or the reverse; whereas a musical man who understood the rules of the art would not endure that the melodies should be wrongly mixed for the sake of giving pleasure, but would resent it if the player did not preserve the modes of the music and did not use the harmonies properly, and conformably to the laws of genuine and inspired music?' (111b–c). Julian thus frankly reveals that most women were thought to be on the intellectual level of ignorant men. Julian's speech may be in praise of a woman whom he acclaims for her virtue,[42] but she is clearly merely an individual amongst her sex.

Another theme is that of flattery, which again reflects the panegyrical nature of the text. Julian seems concerned that his speech will be seen as a cheap attempt to consolidate good relations with the empress, and also with the emperor. In his introduction he states that some conceal the fact that they owe others gratitude, 'trying to avoid a reputation for a sort of servility and for base flattery' (102c). He questions that a woman should be robbed of praise for her good deeds simply from fear of the accusation of flattery, thus justifying his own speech (104b–c). Julian returns to the subject of flattery immediately prior to his account of how he himself received benefactions through the empress; he asserts that he cannot be accused of flattery since he already has all he wants from the emperor and the empress (117a). Thus Julian appears

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[42] Commentators often make much of Eusebia's own intellectual ability (see, for example, Aujoulat 1983a, 80, 93, 103), and Zosimus does mention her intelligence, but Julian's *Speech of Thanks* does not force this notion; he merely notes her 'wit and wisdom' (109c), and that she honours the name of philosophy (120c).

anxious to dispel any question of flattery on his part, but his assertion that he looked for nothing else from the imperial couple need not be taken at face value.

A notable running theme is that of the rejection of wealth and vulgarity. In his introduction Julian criticizes those who give financial gifts ostentatiously, seeking public awareness; he says such behaviour 'is characteristic of a vulgar person' (103d). Julian asserts that he was delighted to find himself in Greece, as 'I desired it more than to possess treasures of gold and silver' (119a). He again attacks wealth, commenting that goodwill is worth more (120d). He waxes lyrical on the gift of books Eusebia gave him to take to Gaul, stating that 'this gift of hers was both welcome and magnificent. And as for gold and silver I neither asked for them nor, were they in question, should I be willing thus to wear out your patience' (126b). As mentioned, when dealing with the subject of the marriage of Constantius and Eusebia, Julian refuses to give a description of the ceremonial progress of the bridal party (111a). Julian conveys the point that substance is more important than gloss. Similarly he refuses to describe in detail all the benefactions and presents that Eusebia granted him once he was Caesar, stating, 'I have no time to gossip about such subjects' (123d). Again at the end of the speech he refers to a visit that the empress recently made to Rome. Julian says that he could have described this as an impressive set piece, including detail on 'the amount of expenditure, how generous and splendid it was, and the costliness of the preparations, and ... the sums she distributed to the presidents of the tribes and centurions of the people', but then dismisses such a possibility curtly saying, 'But nothing of that sort has ever seemed to me worthwhile, nor do I wish to praise wealth before virtue' (129c–d). This last comment is indicative of Julian's general attitude; the thrust of his rejection of wealth and vulgarity seems to be to emphasize the theme of virtue, presenting this as the only thing that is worthy of value and praise.[43] However, it is obvious that Julian is having his cake and eating it; despite his professed unwillingness to conjure up scenes of surface glamour, he manages to do so anyway.

[43] But note Julian's personal asceticism; perhaps these remarks do convey his true opinion.

Distinctive features

Despite the panegyrical nature of the speech and the general acceptance of it as sincere thanks on the part of Julian there are, however, several elements in the work that appear odd. For instance, Julian is forced to acknowledge that his relationship with Constantius had soured, for this is why he found himself held at Milan under a cloud of suspicion in 354–5. Julian states that despite the history of good relations between him and his cousin, 'nevertheless of late I perceived that, I know not why, he was somewhat harsh towards me' (118b). The comment that Eusebia encouraged Constantius's natural bent for mercy, goodness and wisdom seems somewhat double-edged (114c); it suggests that the emperor needed to be incited to be merciful. Indeed Aujoulat sees here a suggestion of the indecisive character of the emperor.[44] Given the subject of the speech it was, however, inevitable that Julian was going to have to deal with sensitive issues such as how he found himself under suspicion at court, and he attempts to deal with these facts by presenting them as an aberration from the norm.

However, there are other comments that seem unsolicited. Julian presents his elevation to the position of Caesarship as being forced upon him,[45] and he appears nonplussed at the change in his life-style from one of modesty and humbleness to one full of pomp and ceremony, an attitude that is consistent with his rejection of wealth and vulgarity. Here Julian was perhaps aiming to create the impression that he did not seek power himself as an attempt to reassure the emperor that he had no self-interest in the imperial position he had attained, but given Julian's renowned ascetic life-style once he became emperor himself, this comment seems rather more honest. However Julian's comments on power and its responsibilities seem somewhat ominous, perhaps conveying inherent criticism of the emperorship of Constantius. Again, reflecting on his position as Caesar he comments that it gave him access to 'powers of the greatest benefit, certainly to those who use them aright, but, when mistakes are made in their use, as being harmful to many houses and cities and cause of countless disasters' (121d–2a). Further, at the end of his speech when Julian again seeks to justify his praise of the virtuous Eusebia, he cites Pericles who

44 Aujoulat 1983a, 86.
45 See the comments of Aujoulat 1983a, 95.

asserted that the only thing he deserved praise for was not causing the death of any citizen; Julian extrapolates, 'Do you think I need any further witness to testify that the greatest proof of virtue and one better worth praise than all the rest put together is not to have caused the death of any citizen, or to have taken his money from him, or involved him in unjust exile?' (129a). Given the history of Julian and his own family and the role that Constantius played in it, it may be felt that his remarks here are rather pointed.

Eusebia herself appears to be treated ambivalently at one point. Commenting on her recent trip to Rome Julian refuses to describe the empress's ceremonial reception there and the benefactions she made to the people, asserting the superiority of virtue to wealth, one of his running themes. Whilst he may mean to focus attention on the virtue of the empress rather than on her access to wealth, his compliment is somewhat back-handed, though once again, as with the subject of the marriage cavalcade, Julian manages to detail what he ostensibly condemns.[46]

It is also notable that the speech gives no sense that Eusebia is being directly addressed, and Julian even seems to lose focus on the subject of his praise at various points in the speech. This is most noticeable when he 'digresses' on Greece and literature. Detailing the episode of his residence in Greece, Julian becomes expansive and animated. He asserts that it had long been his dearest wish to visit this country, that he 'desired it more than to possess treasures of gold and silver' (119a). He also addresses the subject of philosophy and its continued existence in Greece. A similar digression occurs when Julian does take the time to describe one of his wedding gifts from the empress, a collection of classical literature. He says, 'She gave me the best books on philosophy and history, and many of the orators and poets since I had brought hardly any with me from home, deluding myself with the hope and longing to return home again, and gave them in such numbers, and all at once, that even my desire for them was satisfied, though I am altogether insatiable of converse with literature: and, so far as books went, she made Galatia and the country of the Celts resemble a

[46] It may be of interest also that in his introduction, where Julian justifies praising a woman by appealing to the model of Homer, he disconcertingly adds that sometimes Homer praised women whose claim to virtue was slight (104c). This sensation of unease is also felt in the *First Panegyric* when Julian criticizes the genre of panegyric: *Or.* 1.2a–c, 4c.

Greek temple of the Muses' (124a). Julian goes on to discuss the educational benefits of books. In the case of both of these digressions Julian feigns to have forgotten himself in his enthusiasm, but then demonstrates that his expansiveness on these themes was not irrelevant. In the case of the praise of the survival of philosophy in Greece, Julian justifies himself by asserting that he wished 'to show how great were the blessings that Eusebia procured for me because she honoured the name of philosophy' (120b). In the case of his digression on books and education he comments, 'perhaps I ought not now to be writing a panegyric on books, nor to describe all the benefits that we might derive from them, but since I recognize how much the gift was worth, I ought to pay back to the gracious giver thanks not perhaps altogether different in kind from what she gave' (125a); thus Julian sees his literary return for Eusebia's gift of literature as entirely appropriate. Athanassiadi notes that Julian 'makes a point of praising the things that are dearest to his heart, whose experience or possession he owes to Eusebia: Athens and philosophy and books'.[47] However, whilst Eusebia does have a connection with these subjects and Julian himself asserts that they are an integral part of his praise of the empress, it is hard to escape the impression that Julian is pleasing himself as much as he apparently wishes to please the empress, if not more so.

Indeed this focus on Julian rather than Eusebia is one of the most striking features of the speech. Julian was of course bound to mention himself, as his commemoration of the good deeds of the empress was inspired by her specific benefactions to him, but one feels that Julian is much more concerned with himself than with the woman he is praising. Julian creates a striking portrait of himself; he is innocent, a victim, an intellectual, a philosopher, a lover of literature, a despiser of money and a lover of virtue, reluctant to hold political power, humble and ascetic, and a soldier. Aujoulat argues that Julian even manages to acknowledge his own religious persuasion,[48] even though he was officially still in the closet at this time. This emphasis on self-image[49] means that in this panegyric the rhetorician is in danger of eclipsing his subject.

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[47] Athanassiadi 1992, 62.

[48] Aujoulat 1983a, 91–3.

[49] A tendency also recognized by J. Bouffartigue, 'Julien par Julien' in *L'Empereur Julien. De l'histoire à la légende (331–1715)*, edd. R. Braun and J. Richer (Paris, 1978) 15-30, esp. 15–16.

Assessment

Julian's *Speech of Thanks* to Eusebia, probably written *c.*356, was ostensibly inspired by the writer's desire to repay a debt of gratitude to the empress. Julian's immediate model for the speech was found in Homer, both in the poet's assessment of Penelope and more directly in Athene's praise of Arete. However, the work is also influenced by the general conventions of the rhetoric of panegyric, and belongs firmly in the company of Julian's two orations on Constantius. As such its supposed spontaneity and sincerity deserve to be questioned: its subject was simpler and more specific but the work is no less artful for that, and is certainly not the uncontrolled outpouring of Julian's heart. His apparent losses of control, whatever their motivation, are quite deliberate, as he himself confesses. As an artful panegyric the text deserves to be read with much more caution than has been the case. For instance the image of the influential, kind-hearted and philanthropic Eusebia is often taken at face value, but to an extent this is no more than an encomiastic creation of Julian.[50] Eusebia was in fact Julian's greatest threat once he had become Caesar, for if she gave Constantius a male child, Julian's usefulness would be called into question;[51] Ammianus's allegation that Eusebia effected the childlessness of Julian's wife Helena should not be lightly dismissed.[52] Drinkwater also usefully questions Julian's profession of satisfaction at being in Athens;[53] indeed historians should be more cautious when using this text as a source, for it is Julian's version of the events of the years 354–5, a version that perhaps Ammianus Marcellinus himself was dependent upon too. As for so much of Julian's life, we see it through his eyes; he has shaped it for us.

As to the intention of the piece, so far as that can be recovered, its stated object was to commemorate the virtue and good deeds of the empress, specifically those that related to Julian himself, and it is natural to assume that its author wished it to create a favourable

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50 As Aujoulat (1983a and 1983b) recognizes to an extent.

51 For the recognition of Eusebia's dynastic concerns see Aujoulat 1983b, 432–3 and Drinkwater 1983, 368.

52 Ammianus 16.10.18–19. See the comments of Aujoulat (1983b, 437–8), who is certainly willing to believe Ammianus. Ammianus also suggests that Eusebia advocated that Julian should be made Caesar because she didn't want to have to go to Gaul herself (15.8.3).

53 Drinkwater 1983, 368–9.

impression. However, the text does not seem to be purely diplomatic. It contains both implied and direct criticism, and is self-referential, even at this early stage of Julian's Caesarship. These qualities remind one forcibly of Athanassiadi's verdict on the *Second Panegyric* to Constantius, which she saw as a warning to Constantius and as auto-panegyrical, and suggest that the *First Panegyric* deserves closer scrutiny.[54] In his oration on Eusebia Julian sought to praise the empress and emperor, but not to compromise himself. The propaganda of power in the case of this panegyric reflects much more upon the rhetor than his subject.

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[54] I intend to explore the nature of the *First Panegyric* elsewhere.

CHAPTER FIVE

THEMISTIUS: A POLITICAL PHILOSOPHER[1]

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Perhaps in 347, a young teacher of philosophy named Themistius had a rhetorical encounter with the Emperor Constantius II in Ancyra (modern Ankara), which changed the pattern of his life forever. Although Constantius was a Christian and Themistius a traditional, non-Christian Hellene, imperial favour quickly followed. Themistius first graduated to an officially funded teaching post in Constantinople, and then, in 355, was catapulted by his patron into the city's Senate.[2] Constantius continued to show Themistius great favour for the rest of his reign (he died in November 361), as did three subsequent Christian emperors. Themistius pronounced keynote speeches for the Emperors Jovian (AD 363–4), Valens (AD 364–78), and Theodosius (AD 379–95), before disappearing from public life, probably through retirement, in around 384. For the best part of forty years, therefore, Themistius kept himself centre stage in the life of the eastern capital, successfully negotiating four changes of imperial regime. Of all the emperors of his time, it was only under Julian (AD 361–3)—a fellow non-Christian Hellene—that Themistius' personal star lost something of its lustre.[3] By any standards, this was a remarkable performance. The fourth century, in both East and West, throws up many examples of intellectuals making careers around imperial courts, but none who enjoyed such long-lived success. No other fourth-

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[1] This is a shorter version of the introductory chapter to Heather and Moncur 1999. My thanks to Mary Whitby for the opportunity to revise it for inclusion here, and for her great patience while awaiting its appearance.

[2] General accounts: Vanderspoel 1995, ch.4; Dagron 1968, 5–14.

[3] This can be overstated: see the corrective articles of Brauch 1993a, 1993b, although I consider him mistaken in thinking that Themistius held the urban prefecture of Constantinople under Julian. For argument, Heather and Moncur 1999, ch.3.

century orator can match his eighteen surviving speeches, all delivered on major state occasions.[4] The pagan servant of Christian emperors, Themistius is the great political survivor of the fourth century, the Talleyrand of his time.

Themistius was in his own lifetime, and continues to be, a figure of some controversy. As professor of philosophy in Constantinople, he was generally aggressive in advocating the virtues of his own approach to the subject and in criticizing others. It was, as other biographies confirm, a highly competitive environment for the young intellectual on the make. More specifically, Themistius' promotion to the Senate of Constantinople in 355 generated the accusation that he had shown himself too interested in worldly advancement to be a true philosopher, and a further controversy engulfed the tail end of his career, when he accepted the post of urban prefect of Constantinople.[5] Among modern views, older scholarship tended to echo the ancient critics in seeing Themistius as an individual who, despite his own assertions to the contrary, flattered emperors to achieve worldly success.[6] More recently, a somewhat more favourable consensus of opinion has emerged. This view entirely accepts that Themistius used flattery; the evidence is anyway overwhelming. It argues, however, that the flattery was employed for worthwhile ends, not self-advancement. Themistius had ideals in public life—derived from his work on Aristotle and Plato—towards which he consistently worked: championing, amongst other things, a less aggressive approach to foreign policy and religious toleration.[7] Neither of these characterizations seems sufficient. To call Themistius a flatterer fails to do justice to his intellectual inventiveness, and the consistent boldness with which he set about establishing and maintaining a niche in public life. The more recent consensus has fallen into the different trap of taking Themistius' own account of himself at face value. It

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[4] Others have not survived: a panegyric to Julian, and a speech to Valens in 375/6 (Socrates *HE* 4.32). By comparison, other intellectuals such as Ausonius or Himerius failed to extend their pre-eminence beyond single reigns: see, respectively, Matthews 1975, ch.3; Barnes 1987.

[5] See further Méridier 1906; Dagron 1968, 42–60; Vanderspoel 1995, 41–2, 94–5, 108–10, 208–15, 230–40.

[6] Surveyed by Vanderspoel 1995, 2–3, quoting Reiske from the preface to Dindorf's edition of Themistius (xii); Geffcken 1978, 167–8; Alföldi 1952, 109; Piganiol 1972, 234.

[7] There are differences, but the analyses of Downey, Dagron, Daly and Vanderspoel all follow this line.

also encompasses a basic misunderstanding of how policy was actually made in a totalitarian autocracy such as the later Roman Empire.

I *The image of the philosopher*

Themistius was a real philosopher. From his philosophical writings, there survive five paraphrases of works of Aristotle. It was his modest intention, he tells us, to produce small-scale works designed to clarify Aristotle's meaning and aid memorization—a series of teaching aids.[8] From his father, Themistius also tells us, he inherited two big ideas: that philosophy should be turned to practical uses, and that rhetoric was highly important when properly subjugated to philosophical ends. It is hard to tell how distinctive these ideas made him. His polemics castigated rival teachers of philosophy in Constantinople for being much too unworldly and neglectful of general questions of social morality.[9] But even Iamblichus, the great Neoplatonic sage himself, took students who were more interested in oratorical technique than in leading their souls back to the One, and Neoplatonist philosophers from the time of Porphyry onwards were highly interested in rhetoric, reorganizing it as an introduction to dialectic.[10] Where Themistius claims, or appears, to stand apart from contemporary philosophical developments, therefore, any difference may in fact be more a question of emphasis.

When the chance came to become something more than a teacher of philosophy, Themistius seized it with both hands.[11]

[8] Texts: three survive in Greek, two in Hebrew. Themistius expounds his rationale at *In an. post.* 1.2–12; cf. *Or.* 23 (89.20–90.9): Blumenthal 1979, 176–7. In the one exception to this—the mini-commentary Themistius produced in response to *De anima* 3.5 (Aristotle's treatment of the intellect)—Themistius shows considerable knowledge of Neoplatonic writing, and also echoes some Neoplatonic themes and interpretations. Hence Themistius was probably more *au fait* with recent philosophy than the rather bare style of his textbook paraphrases might otherwise suggest; cf. Schroeder and Todd 1990, 34–9, with the notes to their translation at ibid. 90ff.; Todd 1996, somewhat revises the characterization of Themistius' philosophy in Blumenthal 1990.

[9] Méridier, 1906; Vanderspoel 1995, esp. 230–40.

[10] Iamblichus: cf. the comments of J.M. Dillon in discussion included with Brown 1980, 23–4. Neoplatonists and rhetoric: Kennedy 1983, 52–3, 73–86 (on *stasis* theory).

[11] The speech is translated and commented upon in Heather and Moncur

Speaking in front of Constantius II, probably in 347, he deployed a public persona—the philosopher commenting on contemporary politics—which would serve him for the rest of his career. It had a number of key elements. In Hellenic cultural tradition, philosophers were expected to show a total independence from normal worldly concerns. This meant that they could tell the truth without fear or favour. In the words of Themistius' striking opening,

> Now, for the first time, your majesty, there comes on the scene for you an independent speech and a truthful admirer, who would not willingly utter any word, however insignificant, for which he shall not render account to philosophy. (*Or.* 1.1a)

He also made the further claim that his status as a philosopher enabled him to draw on traditional repositories of Hellenic wisdom—particularly Plato and Aristotle—to see more clearly than others where true political virtue might lie. Other speakers tend to praise emperors merely for the external trappings of their power, Themistius claimed, but he could discern the true virtues of Constantius by which the state was really upheld (*Or.* 1.1a–2b). Themistius' public presentation of himself varied little in subsequent orations. Throughout the speeches, Themistius presented himself as a philosopher, sometimes even using the abstract noun 'philosophy' to designate himself. Emperors are congratulated on their care for philosophy, by which Themistius meant the extent to which they protected and promoted his own interests.[12]

As was only appropriate in one claiming to be telling the truth 'for the first time', Themistius also adopted an unusual form of speech structure. The speech carefully signals that its author was in fact familiar with the norms of the *basilikos logos* (imperial speech) as described by Menander Rhetor (e.g. *Or.* 1.2b, 16c), but departs from it decisively.[13] Starting from Plato and Aristotle, Themistius set out to establish from first principles what the character and actions of the ideal ruler should be like. He then compared the specific actions of his imperial subject to these ideals established a priori, 'demonstrating' thereby that Constantius did indeed conform to the profile of an ideal ruler. Like Themistius' philosopher image, this form of speech once adopted proved durable. The needs of the moment led him to include, in subsequent

1999, ch.2.

[12] *Or.* 5.63c–d; *Or.* 6.73b–c; cf. *Or.* 34.vii.

[13] On Menander Rhetor: Russell and Wilson.

speeches, more or less biographical material and discursive argument. Throughout his speeches, however, even if in passages within them rather than their overall structure, Themistius consistently started from philosophical principles when praising the persons and actions which were his subjects for the day.

The extent of his personal creativity in developing and manipulating this rhetorical form is hard to estimate. Themistius states that his style of combining philosophy and rhetoric had been advocated by his father, Eugenius, of whose work nothing survives. It is clear, however, that Themistius was heavily influenced by Dio Chrysostom's four orations *On Kingship*. The influence of Dio's third oration is particularly marked on Themistius' first speech. Both orations define a priori what the ideal king should be like, and then identify with him the reigning emperor. Themistius also borrowed from Dio many of the signs, deriving originally from Plato, of how the 'true king' might actually be recognized.[14] Much of Themistius' self-presentation likewise echoed Dio, who underwent, in the course of his career, a much publicized—by himself—conversion to philosophy, and claimed, like Themistius, that, because he was a philosopher, he could not but tell the truth.[15]

Themistius' debt to Dio is strong, but clearest in *Oration* 1, Themistius' most immature work. At that point, Themistius was the outsider trying to attract imperial attention: a moment of great stress when one might naturally identify a good model and stick to it. *Oration* 1 is also rather different from the later speeches in the balance it maintained between treatments of the philosophical principles of good kingship and specific illustrations of their enaction by the current emperor. Generally speaking, Themistius' later speeches have much more specific content, and this does distinguish them from Dio's orations.[16]

Ancient rhetoric studied not just genre but words themselves, and how to use them in different combinations to achieve required effects. In this area, Themistius greatly impressed contemporaries. For Gregory of Nazianzus he was 'the king of words', and for Libanius the leading orator of his day. This was no hasty judge-

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[14] Dio: Colpi 1988, 151–8. Themistius' father: Vanderspoel 1995, 34–7, 43–4.

[15] On Dio see e.g. Jones 1978; Moles 1978.

[16] Themistius could vary his approach. His self-defence in *Oration* 34 closely —and appropriately—followed the forms advised for forensic oratory: Schneider 1966, 19-22; cf. Heather and Moncur 1999, ch.5.

ment. One letter of Libanius records the care with which he and another mutual friend, Celsus, read through one of Themistius' later speeches, examining in detail its play of ideas and language.[17] Wide reading was the main means of learning how to manipulate words with power. And, as the host of incidental allusions in his speeches demonstrate, Themistius was widely read in most areas of Greek literature. Sometimes, the speeches show more specific borrowings, and, Dio aside, they come from the sources one might expect. *Orations* 5 and 6 borrow recognizably from three speeches to emperors of the second-century orator Aelius Aristides,[18] and most of Themistius' allusions to Isocrates and Demosthenes are from respectively *Oration* 2, *To Nicocles* and *Oration* 18, *On the Crown.*[19] These were canonical examples of how to speak to rulers, which had greatly influenced Dio too. In approaching public life, therefore, Themistius drew on his rhetorical as much as his philosophical training, and, in combining them, modelled himself to a considerable extent on Dio Chrysostom. In the course of his career, however, Themistius went well beyond both the rhetorical and political parameters established by his predecessor for the socially active philosopher.

II *Rewards, dangers, strategies*

To get behind the image of himself which Themistius so carefully erected, it is important to recognize that he played the game of politics for very substantial rewards. Themistius' public persona denied this, but the denials require careful scrutiny. Upon entering the Senate in 355, Themistius had to defend himself against charges of worldliness. He had not, he asserted, taken the official salary in grain and other foodstuffs which his position as salaried teacher in Constantinople afforded him. He had also refused most of the many gifts offered to him by Constantius II. In addition, he had been very careful not to vaunt himself in public. When having dinner with the emperor, he was careful to wear the plain cloak of a philosopher—the *tribonion*—rather than the highly

[17] General judgements: Gregory of Nazianzus: *Epp.* 24, 48; Libanius, *Ep.* 241. The reading: Libanius, *Ep.* 1430, trans. Norman 1992 as *Ep.* 116.
[18] Cf. Vanderspoel 1995, 9–11, 19–20.
[19] Listed at Colpi 1988, 194.

decorated clothes normal to imperial grandees.[20] Wearing the plain garb of the philosopher amidst the gorgeous robes of court grandees was in one sense modest. In another, it was a deliberate act of self-promotion, signalling that this individual had risen quite above worldly vanities. Moreover, it was required behaviour of Hellenic philosophers to reject worldly office, wealth, and reward; not to do so meant that one lacked the necessary independence of spirit. To function credibly as a philosopher, therefore, Themistius simply had to be able to defend himself against accusations of worldliness. Against this background, the refusal of state salaries and imperial gifts, and the showy wearing of plain clothes, start to look a little hollow. They belong to the conceptual category of what the Nixon White House used to call 'deniability'. Whatever the truth, Themistius had to be able to present himself, and do it plausibly, as someone rejecting worldly advancement.

Was Themistius as disinterested in worldly advancement as a true philosopher should have been? His carefully worded denials of the 350s make it clear that he had accepted *some* gifts from Constantius II. He was also careful to point out that Constantius had offered to give him *anything* he might want, thus emphasizing the height of his standing. Nor was Themistius averse to dwelling on other marks of imperial favour, particularly invitations to travel and dine with Constantius and Valens.[21] In a court-dominated political world, access to the emperor was jealously sought and guarded as the route to all favour and preferment. Themistius' less formal successes, even if not involving money or office, were thus nonetheless real, and were recognized as such by his contemporaries. On hearing of his friend's presence at Constantius' dining-table, for instance, Libanius wrote:

> Your presence at table denotes a greater intimacy, that your professions arise from concern for your friends, that anyone you mention is immediately better off, and that his pleasure in granting such favours exceeds yours in receiving them. (*Ep.* 66.2, trans. Norman 1992 as *Ep.* 52)

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20 Themistius gave three speeches in his self-defence: *Orations* 23, 26 and 29. For discussion see Méridier 1906, 14–45; Dagron 1968, 42–9; Vanderspoel 1995, 108–10. The defence has been taken as proof of Themistius' worldly disinterest by, e.g., Vanderspoel 1995, 87–8.

21 Constantius: Libanius, *Ep.* 66.2 (see below); Valens: *Or.* 34.xiii with its interpretation in Heather and Moncur 1999, ch.5.

The equation between access to the emperor and social power could not be more clearly stated. Other successes were still more tangible. Themistius entered the Senate of Constantinople as a direct result of imperial favour. It was something of which he was clearly proud. The survival of Constantius' letter among manuscripts of Themistius' speeches indicates that he placed it with them himself, and he also sent a copy to Libanius.[22] Such public imperial letters were themselves marks of high favour, and Themistius received others. The refused prefecture under Valens was clearly the occasion of another such missive (*Or.* 34.xiii), and a law of Constantius II, laying down who should oversee further admissions to the Senate of Constantinople, likewise singled out Themistius for special mention (*C. Th.* 6.4.12). In similar vein, Constantius also raised a statue to Themistius, and both the fact of the statue, and the verses which adorned it, were duly paraded by Themistius to Libanius, and no doubt also to his many other friends and acquaintances.[23]

Equally public and equally grand was the political profile allowed him by membership of the Senate of Constantinople, and the post of its *princeps*. Apart from leading embassies to various emperors on its behalf, this allowed Themistius to play a prominent role in advancing Constantius' plans for expanding the Senate. In 358/9, Themistius travelled round some of the major cities of the eastern Mediterranean looking for suitable recruits.[24] After this expansion, Themistius was also a standing member of the committee to vet further candidates for admission. The prestige attached to all this activity is obvious, but it also brought him very considerable powers of patronage. Themistius would later claim that he was personally responsible for expanding membership of the Senate from three hundred to two thousand. This probably was the scale of senatorial expansion within his lifetime, and, even if Themistius had not been personally responsible for all of it, there were many new Constantinopolitan senators who owed some or all of their

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22 From Libanius, *Ep.* 434 (trans. Norman 1992 as *Ep.* 12), which also mentions that Themistius had sent copies to various other Antiochene friends.

23 Themistius eventually received two honorific statues: *Or.* 34.xiii. Libanius (*Ep.* 66.5–6) asked for a copy of the verses for the first statue, and mentions that Themistius had talked about them in a letter to the Antiochene rhetor Eudaemon.

24 An introduction: Petit 1957; Dagron 1974, 132–3; Heather 1994, 12–13.

success to Themistius' support.[25] The whole enterprise of expansion, and Themistius' role within it, made him a man that many sought to cultivate. A letter of Libanius from the period pictures his friend sleeping gently on the riverbank, for instance, while the senatorial fish land themselves.[26]

Themistius' own letters, unfortunately, have not survived.[27] We do not have, therefore, an extensive collection of his approaches to possible patrons for favours for himself and others, and endless letters of recommendation for pupils and acquaintances, such as form the backbone of other contemporary books of letters, especially those of Symmachus and Libanius. That Themistius played such roles, and would have written such letters, is entirely clear, however, from forty or so surviving letters written to him by Libanius, and two from Gregory of Nazianzus. These missives demonstrate that Themistius used his position first as a prominent teacher, and then at court, to function as a patronage broker of considerable influence. Not surprisingly, early letters show a marked tendency to enlist Themistius' aid for men of similar cultural interests to himself: rhetors and other intellectuals who wanted to move their teaching interests to Constantinople, or try an alternative career as imperial civil servants.[28] Again, not surprisingly, the later 350s saw Libanius write to him on matters to do with the Senate of Constantinople. The precise matters are worth noting. Libanius clearly perceived Themistius as being willing to use his influence to fix the election expenses of friends and acquaintances, so that they could enter the Senate at reduced cost. Themistius was thus worldly enough to engage in a little manipulative corruption.[29] Beyond such specific matters, we also find Libanius approaching Themistius more generally as a patron: to arrange introductions,[30] or provide help with legal matters of one kind or another.[31] Thus even before he finally accepted the urban

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[25] The claim is made at *Or.* 34.xiii. Themistius personally recruited six out of the thirty new senators of Constantinople who appear in the letters of Libanius in the period 359/61: Petit 1957, 349–54.

[26] *Ep.* 86, trans. Norman 1992 as *Ep.* 44.

[27] That they were once collected is suggested by the ghost of one of them written into the margin beside Libanius, *Ep.* 241 in the Codex Berolinensis (both trans. Norman 1992 as *Ep.* 42).

[28] Greg. Naz. *Ep.* 48; Libanius, *Epp.* 77, 301, 364, 368, 483, 575, 1452.

[29] *Epp.* 70 (cf. 99 and 252) for Olympius; 86 for Celsus; 40 for Julianus.

[30] *Epp.* 291, 62, 55, 1186.

[31] *Epp.* 68/91; 117; 664; 1495.

prefecture from the Emperor Theodosius in 383/4,[32] Themistius was the beneficiary of very real rewards. *Princeps* of the Senate of Constantinople, he undertook major public embassies on its behalf, enjoyed highly privileged access to the person of various emperors, who granted him major marks of public distinction, and was given jobs which brought in their wake extensive powers of patronage. He could not be seen enjoying public office or a state salary, but these limitations did not act as a real barrier to the acquisition of wealth and influence. The imprint of his power as a social fixer could hardly be clearer.

If the rewards of Themistius' chosen path were enormous, so were its potential dangers. Political influence was a highly valued commodity, which could not but attract jealousy. In his *Lives of the Sophists,* Eunapius records the career of another philosopher, Sopater. Coming to the court of the Emperor Constantine in the 320s, he achieved great influence for a time, but was eventually brought low by a hostile clique of jealous courtiers led by the praetorian prefect Ablabius. He was finally executed by decapitation (*VS* 462–3). Themistius faced at least the danger of a similar fate. Late Roman politics were played for high stakes, with death a not unusual consequence of failure.[33] At the other end of the spectrum stand figures such as the rhetor Himerius. Briefly prominent under the Emperor Julian, he then faded into obscurity.[34]

Themistius' career faced one moment of particular crisis: his relative eclipse under the Emperor Julian. In this reign, a different group of Hellenic intellectuals—Neoplatonist theurgists, especially Maximus of Edessa—usurped Themistius' position of chief philosophical advisor. Once Julian was dead, Themistius signalled forcefully in his first speeches for both Jovian and Valens that 'proper' philosophy was now re-established at court. The upstart, indeed fraudulent, opposition had been routed.[35] More generally, there is a marked element of self-assertion throughout the speeches. Most contain some reminder to their audience of Themistius' high

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[32] The acceptance of this post caused a further furore. On its nature, and Themistius' reasons for accepting the prefecture nonetheless, see Heather and Moncur 1999, ch.5.

[33] Cf. the Chalcedon trials of Constantius II's ministers under Julian, or the destruction, after Valentinian's death, of a previously dominant Pannonian faction: respectively Matthews 1989, ch.6; id. 1975, ch.3.

[34] Barnes 1987.

[35] *Or.* 5. 63c–d; *Or.* 6. 73b–c; see further, Heather and Moncur 1999, ch.3.

standing with the reigning emperor. *Oration* 8, for instance, referred obliquely to criticism aimed in his direction, and then went on to stress how much the Emperor Valens, who was under no obligation to do so, valued Themistius' advice. It finished by referring to the tutorship over Valens' son which Themistius now exercised.[36] In later years, Themistius was careful to mention that he was playing the same role to Theodosius' son Arcadius (*Or.* 16.213a–b). Throughout, Themistius nailed his flag firmly to the imperial mast. Hence anyone attacking him knew that they could also be considered to have attacked the emperor(s) who valued him so highly.[37]

Themistius' own speeches and Libanius' letters thus allow us to penetrate somewhat the bland facade of the truth-telling, independent philosopher which their author so carefully erected. Without too much probing, there emerges the determined careerist with an interesting angle to exploit rhetorically (his philosophical credentials), who struggled successfully for thirty years to stay atop the greasy pole. But this does not yet get near to the heart of Themistius' extraordinary success. Why did a sequence of emperors find him such an attractive addition to their regimes?

III *Flattery, propaganda and the usefulness of Themistius*

The adoption of a speech form other than the *basilikos logos* did not prevent Themistius from flattering his imperial subjects. Stressing philosophical principles was really just an alternative encomiastic strategy, a different means to the same end of praising emperors. Viewed through Themistius' lens, every emperor, at least while alive (see below), turned out, coincidentally, to conform to the image of the ideal ruler which our hero constructed from the works of Plato and Aristotle. Constantius II was the ideal ruler in *Orations* 1 to 4, Jovian and Valens both proved to be in *Orations* 5 and 6, and Theodosius was even more ideal, especially in *Oration* 34.[38]

No doubt this was all very pleasing to the emperors concerned. But the rhetorical conjuring trick of being praised in a new way must quickly have lost its novelty, even if it really was new at the

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36 *Or.* 8 esp. 119d–20b, trans at Heather and Matthews 1991, 35–6.
37 See, e.g., *Or.* 34.i: Themistius' defence of his urban prefecture.
38 *Oration* 13 argued that this was also true of the young Emperor Gratian.

moment Themistius first encountered Constantius at Ancyra. Nor, one imagines, can a tenaciously maintained claim to truth-telling have been sufficient guarantee, after emperors started to come and go, that Themistius really was telling the truth, and that his latest subject really was a philosophical ideal incarnate. Despite his philosopher image, Themistius was already facing criticism on this score by the mid 350s. An important passage of Julian's *Letter to Themistius* can only be read as a sarcastic response to Themistius' claims to particular truthfulness. At the same time, considerable doubt was also being raised over his claim to the status of detached and unworldly philosopher.[39] By themselves, neither rhetorical novelty nor claims to enhanced credibility, both of which had originated in the 340s and must have been more or less exhausted by the 350s, are sufficient to explain Themistius' phenomenal success.

i) *Pagan philosopher, Christian emperors*

As Peter Brown has recently reminded us, in Hellenic cultural tradition the philosopher was the defender *par excellence* of the correct social values imparted by a traditional education (*paideia*). He was the ultimate intellectual, called in at moments of high drama to identify and defeat the forces of evil: Zola and *J'accuse*. In particular, it had long been traditional for cities to employ philosophers to undertake difficult embassies to Roman emperors, when some unwelcome truth had to be spelled out. Philosophers were traditionally empowered with the right to an absolute freedom of speech: *parrhesia*. It was part of the game that emperors could be expected to show greater toleration of dissent when confronted by a philosopher in full cry. Nevertheless, philosophers were also expected to show greater bravery (καρτερία: mental and physical endurance) than ordinary men in the face of possible imperial anger.[40] These traditions had not yet lost their force in Themistius' day. Eunapius could plausibly present the philosopher Sopater as improving, by influence and argument, the character of the Emperor Constantine, and Himerius claimed that Hermogenes

[39] Julian, *Letter to Themistius* 254b. On the charge of sophistry made in Constantinopolitan intellectual circles see esp. the perceptive analysis of Dagron 1968, 42–9.

[40] Brown 1980; id. 1992, chs.1–2.

had moderated the faults of Gallus Caesar some thirty years later. Likewise, in the 370s, the cities of Epirus chose the philosopher Iphicles to brave the legendary anger of the Emperor Valentinian I, and expose the corrupt mismanagement of Illyricum by its praetorian prefect, Petronius Probus.[41]

Themistius' self-presentation exploited this potent image in a variety of ways. *Parrhesia* figures in the speeches, on occasion, as a technical term, and it was precisely in a further dimension of this image that much of Themistius' usefulness for his imperial employers lay. All of the emperors to whom Themistius was close—Constantius II, Jovian, Valens, and Theodosius I—were Christians, even if some pursued more aggressive religious policies than others.[42] Many of the local landowning élites who ran the eastern Empire for them, however, remained Hellenic pagans. The pace of religious conversion is difficult to judge, but it is probably significant that only in the later 380s did Christians in the Theodosian regime feel strong enough to start destroying pagan temples. This is particularly associated with the praetorian prefecture of Maternus Cynegius, who seems to have been acting at least in part on personal initiative in encouraging bands of fanatical monks to destroy pagan shrines.[43] Likewise, it was only from the 390s that aggressively anti-pagan legislation started excluding non-Christians from imperial service.[44] No doubt something approaching a critical mass was required before such legislation could be passed, let alone implemented, but the experience of Julian's reign had led Valentinian and Valens to a policy of religious toleration in the 360s and 370s. And as late as 383, in the West, it was still plausible for both the pagan senator Symmachus and Bishop Ambrose of Milan each to claim that their co-religionists represented majority opinion in the Roman Senate.[45]

Themistius' career can be characterized, therefore, as a self-styled pagan philosopher serving Christian emperors, who in turn governed an empire whose landowning élites remained substantially pagan. The active participation in local government of these

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[41] Sopater: Eunapius, *Lives of the Sophists* (380 Wright). Hermogenes: Barnes 1987. Iphicles: Ammianus 30.5.8–10.

[42] Differences in degrees of toleration are implied by variations in tone between Themistius, *Orations* 5 and 6: Heather and Moncur 1999, ch.3.

[43] Matthews 1975, 140–2; cf. id. 1967.

[44] A good survey is Fowden 1978.

[45] Symmachus, *Rel.* 3; Ambrose, *Ep.* 16; cf. Matthews 1975, 203–11.

élites was critical to such vital state functions as raising and paying taxes, and maintaining law and order. The late Roman state was in many ways highly centralized, but covered vast areas of territory, using only backward, pre-industrial communications. In such circumstances, much power could not but be devolved to local landowners, whose attitude to any regime was crucial to its enduring success. The opinion of local landowners did matter, and much effort was deployed by emperors to establish good relations with them.[46]

In this context, Themistius' participation in a Christian regime carried something of a talismanic quality. As a philosopher, he was the guardian of traditional *paideia.* If he could speak in favour of a particular Christian emperor, and if that emperor was happy to favour him, this sent an important signal. Whatever worrying cultural novelties the given Christian ruler might have introduced, he nevertheless continued to support traditional values to the extent that an old-fashioned philosopher, the guarantor of *paideia,* could both find him praiseworthy and be treated respectfully by him in turn. For a whole series of Christian emperors, employing Themistius affirmed a commitment to continuity—vital for attracting élite support—in the midst of cultural transformation.

This shows up clearly in the speeches. Rather than simply avoiding religion and other potentially contentious matters, Themistius took a much bolder line. His approach varied slightly from regime to regime, but his underlying strategy was to stress the consensual. Christianity may have had non-Hellenic origins, but, by the fourth century, a long dialogue with Mediterranean culture had led to considerable syncretism. Platonism was fundamentally shaping both its theological doctrines and the language in which they were expressed, and, over the centuries, commentators had established and extended what was common, in moral and other teachings, to Christianity and traditional Hellenic *paideia.* Themistius rooted himself firmly in this middle ground, stressing what was shared by both the new and the old. Even *philanthropia*—for Themistius the imperial virtue *par excellence*—was by the mid

[46] There is no space here to deal with this subject fully, but see e.g. Wickham, 1984; Heather, 1994. The works of John Matthews document the functioning of the late Roman Empire through its networks of élite personal connection. For Theodosius and such élites at the start of his reign see Heather and Moncur 1999, ch.4.

fourth century a term common both to Christians and non-Christians for expressing divine virtue.[47] Stressing *philanthropia* was about as controversial as a modern politician saying that he or she believes in low inflation, low interest rates, and full employment.

ii) *Politics, independence, and the 'truth'*

In their own lifetimes, each of Themistius' imperial patrons was compared, in turn, to a set of ideal virtues derived in some way from Plato and Aristotle, and each was found to be the personification of those virtues. Less often noticed is the fact that, after their deaths, Themistius was entirely ruthless in damning the same emperors' faults. While Constantius II lived, Themistius professed to see in him the ideal philosopher king. After his death, things changed. *Orations* 5 and 6 to Jovian and Valens identified a number of Constantian deficiencies. The fact that taxes had risen consistently under his rule was emphasized. Much more startling, however, is the prominence given to the dynastic bloodbath which had followed the death of Constantius' father Constantine in 337, and from which Constantius and his two brothers—Constantine II and Constans—emerged as prime beneficiaries. With Constantius safely dead, Themistius quickly damned his memory by publicly referring to these notorious murders in front of the assembled imperial court on great state occasions (e.g. *Or.* 6.74b–c). During his lifetime, similarly, Valens was again the epitome of virtue. When Themistius reconsidered Valens in the time of his successor Theodosius, however, his lack of proper experience in public office prior to assuming the purple was now portrayed as making it impossible for him to have reigned successfully. Amongst other things, Themistius retrospectively remarks, it caused him to make ill-judged appointments, not least that of his infant son to a consulship, and to be ungenerous and vengeful towards his subjects.[48]

Examples could be multiplied. Although Themistius was not so closely associated with the Emperor Julian, he did give a panegyric

[47] Downey 1955; id. 1957 argued that *philanthropia* was built up by Themistius as a Hellenic rival to Christian virtue. His footnotes tell a different story. By the fourth century *philanthropia* was a common term among Christian theologians, and in wide use even in liturgical contexts.

[48] During his lifetime: *Or.* 8.112d–13c. After his death: *Or.* 15. esp. 196–97a; *Or.* 16. esp. 205d–206c.

to him which has unfortunately not survived.[49] Nevertheless, *Orations* 5 and 6 were at points heavily critical of Julian and his policies, especially on the religious front.[50] Gratian too, the ideal ruler of *Oration* 13 (given in 376/7) came in for rather more dismissive treatment between 379 and 383 in *Orations* 14, 15 and 16 (see below). Themistius, of course, predeceased Theodosius, so no *post de facto* reconsiderations of this emperor have come down to us. There is every reason to suppose, however, that this latest ideal philosopher-king might also, in retrospect, have been found wanting.

Themistius' willingness to be economical with his loyalties, of course, was essential if he were to cross successfully from one regime to another, as the different emperors of his political lifetime came and went. Savaging dead friends also added some real credibility to his stance as a truth-teller. Themistius claimed to tell the unvarnished truth at all times, but truth-tellers in autocracies do not have a great life expectancy. Standing up in front of Constantius II in all his pomp, for instance, and telling him to his face that he belonged to a dynasty of Oedipal fratricides, or Valens that he was an over-promoted nobody, would probably have generated an exciting, but brief, political career. In such contexts, telling the truth after the event is about the best that anyone could be expected to do, and it probably would have gone some way, in his audience's minds, to substantiate the claims Themistius made about himself. The kind of parallel that comes to mind is Kruschev's famous public denunciation of Stalin at the Soviet party Congress. Such a performance was quite impossible in the dictator's lifetime, and, even if one had previously served him, a fair amount of personal credit could be gained for even a *post de facto* condemnation.

Turning on former patrons had more than personal significance. None of the regimes Themistius served originated in a straightforward transfer of power from one emperor to a designated successor. Jovian had not been designated by Julian before his death; the succession of Valentinian—and hence Valens—was improvised after Jovian's early and mysterious demise. Theodosius, another non-dynastic successor, was promoted only because Valens was killed by the Goths at Hadrianople. Hence each of

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[49] It possibly survives in Arabic translation: Vanderspoel 1995, 127–34, 244–9.

[50] See further Heather and Moncur 1999, ch.3.

these regimes had to establish themselves in part by justifying the political discontinuity they represented. Sometimes the reasons were pressing. Various members of the Constantinian house, including an adult male (Julian's uncle Procopius) and Constantius II's daughter, were still alive, for instance, when Valens came to the throne. It was a priority for his regime, therefore, to establish in people's minds why Constantinian continuity should not be viewed as an attractive prospect. In a similar vein, Theodosius was promoted by Gratian, a member of the Valentinianic dynasty, whose half-brother, Valentinian III, was also formally an Augustus. Establishing his own credentials for ruling at the expense of the posthumous reputation of Valens, another member of the dynasty, thus made extreme sense for Theodosius, who had dynastic ambitions of his own.[51] For these emperors, it was extremely useful for a known adherent of the previous regime, who was also a self-styled truth-teller, to damn in public some central aspect of the previous political order.

What this suggests, of course, is that Themistius was not the independent commentator that his self-presentation claimed. The closer one looks at the speeches and their contexts, indeed, the harder it is to avoid the conclusion that their substantive contents were dictated by the immediate needs of current rulers. Most notorious is Themistius' treatment, in *Oration* 5, of Jovian's peace with the Persians in 363. This actually represented a total disaster for the Roman state, involving humiliating concessions of important territories. Yet, in a speech celebrating Jovian's consulship on 1 January 364, Themistius stood up and claimed it as a Roman victory. His treatment is extremely brief, a sign, perhaps, that the embarrassment inherent in the peace terms really was inescapable. No other contemporary commentator saw the peace as anything other than a great disaster, and Themistius himself, once Jovian was safely dead, would characterize it as a defeat that it was desirable to reverse.[52] What we see here can only be described as a spin doctor and his emperor in deepest trouble. Themistius was presumably under orders to try to sell the policy as a victory,

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[51] Valens and the Constantinian dynasty: Heather and Moncur 1999, ch.3. Theodosius and Valens: Heather and Moncur 1999, ch.4.

[52] Cf. Themistius' throw-away reference at *Or.* 16.213a to a possible rescue of 'all the territory of Mesopotamia that others abandoned ...'.

which was indeed the line taken by the regime,[53] and did his best to serve Jovian's interests.

Themistius' lines of argument often correlate suspiciously closely with immediate imperial needs. The difference between his characterizations of the Emperor Theodosius in *Orations* 14 and 15, for instance, is very striking. In the first, Theodosius was the military hard man elevated to the purple to win the Gothic war. In the second, leadership in war is demoted to a minor and ancillary imperial virtue, an emperor's main job being civilian government. The likeliest explanation of this switch of emphasis is the fact that, in the meantime, Theodosius' army had suffered a major reverse at the hands of the Goths, causing him to surrender control of the war to Gratian.[54] In *Orations* 6 and 8, likewise, Themistius made the best of a bad job when faced with Valens' relative lack of experience in high public office. Valens' deep understanding of household management was wheeled out instead as a suitable qualification for the purple.[55] Once Valens was safely dead and his successor had contradictory requirements, then, as we have seen, Themistius portrayed inexperience as the root cause of Valens' mistakes. In *Orations* 14 to 16, likewise, the amount of credit given to Gratian declined and increased according to the extent of Theodosius' current need for his colleague's military support.[56]

There are thus blatant inconsistencies, between different orations, in Themistius' treatment of the same persons, themes, and issues. Since the differences in treatment vary according to the immediate needs of the current emperor, in so far as we can reconstruct them, the simplest explanation is that Themistius knew precisely which particular ends any given speech was required to serve. How Themistius might have been made aware of these needs must have changed over time. In *Oration* 1, he was still an outsider. Nonetheless, the overlaps between his speech and others of Julian and Libanius to the same emperor indicate that he was

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[53] Jovian's coinage proclaimed the peace a victory (Vanderspoel 1995, 145), as did his verbal propaganda (Ammianus 25.8.12).

[54] The defeat: Heather 1991, 147–56. More detailed analysis of the speeches: Heather and Moncur 1999, ch.4.

[55] *Or.* 6.81b–c; *Or.* 8, as n.48.

[56] On Theodosius and Gratian see further Heather and Moncur 1999, ch.4. Note too that *Oration* 16.213a–b finishes with a eulogy of Theodosius' son Arcadius. It was delivered less than three weeks before the latter's promotion to Augustus, a promotion which Gratian never sanctioned.

praising Constantius in terms which Constantius himself dictated.[57] Someone close to the emperor, therefore, had presumably given him a clear indication of at least some of the points that should be made. From the mid 350s, the procedure must have been different. As the close confidant of a sequence of emperors, Themistius presumably had some input into policy-making. Even if he was primarily a publicist, mostly concerned with 'how' matters should be presented, this was still a considerable vantage point from which to exert influence. As remains the case in the modern day, the need to make a policy publicly acceptable can have a substantial effect upon its contents. In reflecting upon his own career, indeed, Themistius later claimed to have exercised particular influence over some of Valens' decisions. The claim was made, however, in the time of Theodosius, somewhat after the fact, so that it should perhaps be treated with caution.[58] The most impressive evidence of Themistius' importance in the time of Valens, in fact, is actually provided by incidental references to the range of his activities. He spent much time, for instance, with the emperor in the late 360s, when the latter was fighting a difficult Gothic campaign,[59] and was again with him at Antioch in *c.*375. Even more impressive is his sudden dash westwards from Mesopotamia to Gaul, to the court of the western emperor, Gratian, probably in 376. This is exactly the moment that the Gothic problem, which would culminate in the disaster at Hadrianople in 378, first unleashed itself on Valens' Danube frontier. We know that Valens hurriedly negotiated military assistance from his western partner, and it seems very hard not to associate Themistius with this crucial mission.[60]

iii) *Orator and audience*

On the face of it, Themistius' intended audience was always the emperor. Sometimes this really was the case. The main audience for *Oration* 1 certainly was Constantius II, whose favour Themistius was keen to attract. After 355, when he became a senator, many of

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[57] E.g. *Or.* 1.1b, 5b, 7c–d; cf. Vanderspoel 1995, 79.

[58] *Or.* 31.354d; cf. Vanderspoel 1995, ch.7. See below for Themistius' apparent use of pleas.

[59] Heather and Matthews 1991, ch.2.

[60] Heather and Moncur 1999, ch.4.

his speeches were either given before the Senate of Constantinople, or in the course of embassies conducted on its behalf. As such, the contents of these speeches, even when given away from the city, would have been made known to the Senate. *Oration* 5, given before Jovian at Ancyra, was also given a second reading in Constantinople (Socrates *EH* 3.26). It is worth reflecting on the nature of this senatorial body. A relatively new foundation, first established by Constantine, it was only in the reign of Constantius II that its members seem to have been given the same status—*clarissimi*—as their counterparts in Rome. In the mid to late 350s, Constantius greatly expanded its numbers and forced senators of Rome resident in the east to relocate to Constantinople. By *c.*360, it was thus composed of senior and retired imperial functionaries, civilian and military, and a substantial cross-section of the richer landowners of the eastern Mediterranean, who had been recruited to it from the town councils of their home cities. By the mid fourth century, there was already, in any case, a considerable overlap between these two groups.[61]

The new senators did not lose contact with the home provinces from which they had come. After the riot of the statues in 387, for instance, and again when advancing the claims of his friend Thalassius, Libanius mobilized support among Constantinopolitan senators of Antiochene origin. The letters of the Cappadocian fathers, likewise, are full of requests for help to great imperial functionaries, several of whom had Cappadocian origins—the starting-point of the relationship being exploited. Such chains of connection—based on travel, letter-writing, marriage, and peripatetic study—formed the bedrock on which the 'conductivity' (as Peter Brown once labelled it) of the landowning classes of the eastern Mediterranean was based: their ability to act over vast distances as a surprisingly homogeneous group of opinion.[62] The body assembled in Constantinople by Constantius thus represented a fair cross-section of the landowning, tax-paying, tax-gathering, and locally dominant opinion by whom and for whom the Empire was run. It would be hard to identify a better starting-point

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[61] Heather 1994.

[62] The interconnections of eastern élites in the late Empire still await the kind of comprehensive treatment provided for the West by Matthews 1975. For some introductory thoughts, Heather 1994; or, a completely different angle, Brown 1976.

from which to attempt to influence opinion among those who really mattered in the running of the eastern Empire.

This senatorial audience is critical to a full understanding of Themistius' career. In his speeches, Themistius often portrays himself as championing senatorial opinion to the emperor. In *Oration* 16, for instance, he stated that the Senate only kept him at its head for his speeches (*Or.* 16.200a–c). On many occasions, however, Themistius was actually advocating the virtues of established imperial policy to the Senate. It was not Jovian, for instance, who needed to be convinced of the virtues of the—in fact humiliating—peace agreement of 363 in *Oration* 5, but the tax-payers of the cities, among whom, Zosimus reports, there was open dissent (3.34.3). Or again with *Oration* 16: it was not Theodosius, but landowning, tax-paying opinion, which needed reassuring that the Gothic peace of 382, a marked departure from normal Roman expectations of victory over 'barbarians', was a 'good thing'.[63]

These are perhaps the most blatant instances of Themistius selling, or attempting to sell, imperial policy to the Senate, rather than representing senatorial opinion to the emperor. But the number of documentable cases where Themistius was advocating what was clearly established imperial policy, or placing an interpretation on past events which suited the needs of the current regime, is, as we have seen, very large. In doing so, he was ready to play rhetorical tricks. From the time of Jovian onwards, Themistius often cast elements of his speeches in the form of pleas in favour of the case he was making. We find a plea, for instance, for religious toleration in *Oration* 5, for good relations between Valens and his brother in *Oration* 6, and for more senators for Constantinople in *Oration* 14. On the face of it, the point of a plea should be to convince somebody to do something that they were not already doing. Hence it has recently been argued that they should be understood as direct attempts on Themistius' part to influence imperial policy-making in favour of his own views.[64]

But some of the pleas, at least, cannot be taken at face value. By the time Themistius gave *Oration* 5, Jovian had already passed a

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63 Expectations of victory: McCormick 1986. On *Orations* 15 and 16 see Heather and Moncur 1999, ch.4.

64 The view of Vanderspoel 1995, esp. 148–53 (on Jovian and religious toleration). Similar too is Dagron 1968, 95–112 and Daly 1972 on *Orr.* 8 and 10. These speeches refer to a senatorial embassy led by Themistius to Valens which attempted to persuade him to cease the war of 367–9 with the Goths.

measure of religious toleration which encompassed non-Christians. Here again, it was not Jovian who needed to be persuaded of the virtues of religious toleration. Likewise, the text of *Oration* 14 shows that Theodosius had already been appointing new senators for Constantinople, before Themistius opened his mouth. There is also not the slightest sign that any tension ever hampered relations between Valens and his brother, least of all in the first year when they had just divided the Empire.[65] What, then, was the purpose of these pleas?

As a rhetorical device, their main effect is to attract the audience's attention away from the emperor as the source of a given policy. If, in a formal speech given in front of the emperor, someone pleads with him to continue what he is doing, this plants the idea that he might not. Such a strategy could serve a variety of functions. The likeliest potential hindrance to a Christian emperor, such as Jovian, pursuing a policy of religious toleration was other Christians: bishops and other Christian elements demanding that their religion's claims to uniqueness be followed through to their logical end. Using a plea here, therefore, might be an attempt to protect the emperor, making it easier for him to justify his policy. Toleration, such a plea would allow him to claim, was what a large body of public opinion, represented by Themistius the guardian of *paideia*, was demanding. Such an interpretation also works in the case of the Gothic peace of 382. Having Themistius dwell at length on why it was a good idea, gave the emperor a further defence against possible critics. The main reason for Themistius to adopt a pleading tone was probably not to change imperial policy, therefore, but to help deflect potential criticism.[66]

This interpretation of Themistius' pleas is much more plausible than envisaging them as overt attempts to change imperial policy. Policy-making in an autocracy is done behind closed doors, not in public by the casting of votes. In *Oration* 34, indeed, Themistius signalled to his audience that imperial politics did not function as they might appear to.[67] Certainly under Valens, and probably

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[65] Themistius' usages at *Or.* 5.67c, 68a, 68d (2 examples), 69d, 70b make it clear that some measure of pagan toleration had already been passed; cf., with further arguments, Heather and Moncur 1999, ch.3. Theodosius and senators: *Or.* 14. 183c.

[66] Such an approach also works in the case of Valens' withdrawal from the Gothic war of 367–9: Heather and Matthews 1991, ch.2.

[67] *Or.* 34.xiv; cf. Brown 1992, chs.1–2 on the formulation of policy in the

earlier too, Themistius must have become involved in formulating policy. This participation was not conducted via his public orations, however, but in other moments of more private consultation which, by their nature, are hidden from us. The speeches are about publicizing and justifying policy, not formulating it, and, in particular, about using the Senate of Constantinople as a conduit to manipulate opinion throughout the landowning classes of the eastern Mediterranean.

To play this role, Themistius was perfectly cast. His credentials as a philosopher were genuine enough. He could pose very naturally as a defender of traditional *paideia* and the shared values of this class. He was, in addition, as Libanius and Gregory of Nazianzus emphasized, a master orator, an expert in manipulative rhetorical argument. He thus spoke the language common to this class, and could draw on the traditional kinds of arguments and illustrations which they might find convincing. Even more important, Themistius knew many, if not in fact all, of the senators of Constantinople personally. Some he recruited himself in the late 350s, but, even in subsequent years, he remained part of the panel approving membership, and hence came into contact with newer recruits too.[68] Others will have attended the lectures he gave on the importance of active philosophy, and courted him both then and subsequently for jobs and other favours. No one could have been better placed to deliver the backing of senatorial opinion, or a large block of it anyway, when imperial policy needed support. No doubt, the formal speeches were preceded by extensive and careful lobbying further to prepare the ground. It is in his mastery of the Senate of Constantinople—the new political instrument created by Constantius II—that the key to Themistius' extraordinary political longevity lies.

Conclusion

Themistius was much more, therefore, than either a simple flatterer, or a philosopher using flattery as a means to particular

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late Roman autocracy.

[68] *C. Th.* 6.4.12. This stayed on the books despite Themistius' relative eclipse under Julian, so that he presumably had contacts with all those subsequently promoted.

ends. He was, above all, a skilful and sophisticated propagandist, whose career was based on manipulating opinion within the Senate of Constantinople, which rapidly became a central focus of Roman political life in the eastern Mediterranean. This was done partly through rhetoric, but more perhaps through the chain of connections which his role in recruiting for the new body had allowed him to generate. Policy in the autocratic later Roman Empire was made in secret, through the interaction of factional interests. With his mastery of a body of senatorial opinion after the late 350s, it is perhaps not too much to see Themistius as a faction leader, the head of one of a series of interest groups whose haphazard collisions shaped imperial destiny.

It may be, too, that a final and more substantial point can be made about his historical importance. Themistius' claims to independence cannot be taken at face value. He was an insider performing tasks set for him by his imperial masters. At the same time, his very presence in a regime imposed certain limitations upon it. The fact that he was used to signal cultural continuity limited the extent to which regimes in which he was a participant could respond to the demands, for instance, of a more radical Christian agenda. This shows up well in the 380s. Themistius disappeared from active public life in *c*.384. It was at exactly this point, under the praetorian prefecture of Maternus Cynegius from 384 to 388, that the first round of radical pagan temple destruction was unleashed.[69] This might be pure coincidence. But Themistius' retirement from Theodosius' regime removed one of the power-blocks which would have set itself against more militant Christianization. Other, longer-term processes, of course, also underlay Cynegius' freedom to act: not least the progressive Christianization of eastern landowning élites. Indeed, Themistius' retirement itself probably signalled a generational shift. The generation recruited with him and by him into the Senate in the mid 350s would, like Themistius himself, have been passing out of active public life by the mid 380s. Their places would have been taken by individuals among whom processes of Christianization were further advanced. Themistius' retirement is thus deeply emblematic of the changes which made possible Cynegius' career of destruction. It also helps explain why Themistius had no successor. Christian emperors

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[69] Refs. as n.43.

needed pagan apologists only when much of the audience to which they were playing remained pagan. Once a critical mass of the landowning élite became Christian, the image of the philosopher lost its political potency.

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CHAPTER SIX

TACEAT SUPERATA VETUSTAS: LIVING LEGENDS IN CLAUDIAN'S *IN RUFINUM* 1

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Introduction

This article re-examines the mythological motifs which recur throughout Claudian's *In Rufinum* 1. The poem *Against Rufinus* was Claudian's first major work in celebration of his patron Stilicho, and in it he presents the western regent in heroic terms and his adversary as a protégé of demonic forces. The poem is admired principally as part of an impressive corpus which illustrates Claudian's facility with the Latin hexameter and the exuberance of his panegyric and invective. He writes within the pagan mythological framework and his poetry is packed with apparently effortless allusions to his classical predecessors. *In Rufinum* has generally been assessed as a poem with these criteria to the fore. The skill of its propaganda and the conviction the poet achieves with his vividly drawn picture of an embattled cosmos in need of a saviour are not so frequently addressed. Rather, this central aspect of the poem is explored for its historical accuracy, not for its psychological conviction.[1] However, Claudian's coherent pagan imagery contains Christian resonances and plays upon anxieties shared by both belief systems. This was a cultural climate in which paganism and Christianity not only coexisted but also communicated and this communication was not a narrowly cerebral one, the

[1] Levy's commentary (1971) is meticulous in crediting Claudian with constant and conscious allusion to the canonical classical authors. Gibbon celebrated the Greek-speaking Alexandrian's skill with the Latin language and with his inherited imagery (III 30). However, because Claudian's historical accuracy has been found wanting, a frustration when one is in the business of reconstructing significant events in a notoriously patchily-documented century, historians tend to assume that his propaganda techniques were *in his own time* laughable rather than persuasive.

common currency of classical texts, but had a few fundamental preoccupations which enabled the exchange. At key points Christian and pagan world views collided, especially where the integrity of the cosmos and the grim and divisive purpose of evil were concerned.[2]

The cosmic framework of *In Rufinum* draws on contemporary susceptibility to conspiracy theories as explanation for disasters and defeats throughout the empire.[3] The message of the poem is that a serious threat to the empire has been dispatched and that the evil forces behind that threat have, against the odds, been discomfited. Claudian's audiences would be readily receptive to depictions of good and evil operating through human agents, even when these roles were filled by contemporary figures specially reconstructed for his poetic purposes.

The death of the Emperor Theodosius without an adult heir in AD 395 had left two regents in control of the western and eastern Empire. Stilicho commanded the armies in the West and was in the unique position of controlling the eastern military forces, as these had remained in Italy after the battle of the Frigidus against the western usurper Eugenius in summer 393. Stilicho was *semibarbarus* (his father was a Vandal) but he had married into the royal family and entitled himself on inscriptions *adfinis diui Theodosii Augusti* ('relative of the god Theodosius Augustus'). He also styled himself *Parens principum* ('father of the emperors'), claiming that Theodosius had on his deathbed designated him protector of and ruler on behalf of both his young sons, Honorius in the West and Arcadius in the East. Ambrose, bishop of Milan, appears to have supported this assertion of Stilicho's but it never gained any credence in the East.[4]

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[2] For an exposition of Christian attitudes towards the *di inferi* ('nether gods') and the shared perceptions of the powers of darkness see Solmsen 1965, 242–5.

[3] Christian Gnilka believes that Claudian is consciously tapping into real fears with his depiction of barbarian incursions as demonic and elemental, but he recognizes the difficulty the modern reader has in empathizing with the ancient view of supernatural intervention: 'It is hard for us today to see in such figures any more than rhetorical constructions intended to have a purely superficial effect', translated from Gnilka 1973, 159.

[4] See Cameron 1970 *passim* (still the standard work on Claudian, which places him in both literary and historical contexts); also O'Flynn's chapters 'The roots of Stilicho's power' (1983, 14–24) and 'Stilicho and the barbarians' (25–42).

Rufinus was legitimate regent in the East, but he was not popular. He had gained a reputation for high-handedness, avarice and excessive cruelty in his treatment of the rebellious or heretical.[5] Feelings ran so high against him among the troops (or were whipped up to fever pitch by enemies at Constantinople) that he was torn apart by the eastern contingent when Stilicho returned them to the capital in the middle of his campaign against Alaric in Thessaly. Rufinus was probably little mourned, but he was quickly replaced by the eunuch Eutropius and Stilicho's claim to rule in the East foundered once more.

As a propagandist for the western generalissimo Stilicho, Claudian is clearly a vital witness in a period where written evidence is patchy and unreliable. The challenge he presents to historians is one of partisanship; he is engaged in producing polemics and panegyrics as an official spokesman for Stilicho and performing fancy footwork as he follows the swerves of policy forced upon the western regent in a volatile political situation, the troubled times of barbarian incursions and administrative fragmentation at the end of the fourth century AD.[6]

Claudian is consistently concerned with the presentation of his patron in the most favourable light. *In Rufinum* sets the agenda by introducing Stilicho as a champion of the Empire and the preserver of its unity. In Claudian's poetic cosmos anyone who is perceived as driving a wedge between the imperial brothers, as pursuing separate policies in the East, is depicted as an agent of the denizens of Hades sent to destroy the unity of the Roman world. This view of the political realities of the time is conveyed by the translation of the chief players into epic antagonists. Their opposing interests and rather untidy manœuvring for positions of advantage, which emerge from the piecing together of historical evidence, are elevated by Claudian into a cosmic conflict between the forces of light and darkness.[7] Claudian creates a world peopled with symbolically-charged figures of disturbing and ambiguous

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[5] The keen orthodoxy of the Spanish and Gallic provincial nobility is emphasized by Malamud 1989, 20–3.

[6] Stilicho's policies and problems are succinctly and sympathetically reviewed by O'Flynn 1983.

[7] For the Christian imagery of light and dark polarities see Brooke 1987. One of Brooke's conclusions (295) is that Christian similes are used for interpretative purposes which transcend mere decoration: 'It recalls the pagan form only to engage with its narrative in a way closer to biblical exegesis'.

status, as discussion on the role of the Furies (below, pp.161–8) will show.

In the *In Rufinum* Claudian presents a stage upon which Stilicho loses all hint of his Vandal paternity and his opponents or rivals in power emerge as alien, whatever their origin and status in the real world. The battle between good and evil as portrayed by the poet draws its villains and heroes from the pagan cultural heritage. However, perceptions of monsters, Satans and their *doppelgänger* as real presences drew upon shared anxieties in this epoch of barbarian incursions. Christian and pagan citizens of the Empire were only too willing to give credence to some kind of demonic motivation behind both natural and unnatural disasters. The common assumption, and not one confined to the Manichean strand, was that the Antichrist invariably came mob-handed to a fragile human environment.[8] Upon such a picture and its immediate accessibility for the audience rested Claudian's success in selling Stilicho as a saviour straddling the world and championing the imperial heritage of Rome and its empire against demonic perversion.

Building on past approaches

There is a tendency to assume that the inventions contained within satirical polemic or invective pieces continued to 'cause pain and hilarity and not to be believed' as was the case, or so the argument goes, in the days of the late Republic.[9] It is a central tenet of this article that Claudian intended his reinterpretation of the origin and role of Rufinus to be believed, not perhaps as proven fact but as a strong possibility. Claudian's attack on Rufinus cannot be treated simply as a ceremonial coda marking the death of his patron's enemy. It is a genuine attempt to persuade its audience that a real and demonic danger had threatened the Empire but was now destroyed. In order to reinvent the real figures, demonizing Rufinus and Romanizing Stilicho, Claudian had to compose a

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[8] Gnilka 1973, 158–9.

[9] Nisbet (1987, 193–7) emphasizes the entertainment value of the destruction and deconstruction of the enemy's true pedigree. Of particular relevance to Claudian are accusations in standard patterns of abuse that the subject grew up in an unwholesome atmosphere. Long (1996, 97–105) applies features of late-antique satire to Claudian's method of attack.

credible poetic landscape in which the transformations could take place.

The literary texture of Claudian's work has been subjected to some rigorous critiques which have tended, however admiring of his technique, to reinforce impressions of his work as derivative and decorative, not lofty nor profound.[10] This approach is both valid and understandable. After all, Claudian is a poet operating within the context of colourful and ceremonial courts, where poems of celebration studded with classical allusions and familiar myths and legends, provided part of the elaborate ostentation of a highly visual age.[11] However, Claudian both benefits and suffers from the characterization of late-antique poetry as 'the jewelled style' which puts particular emphasis on the decorative aspects of mythological allusions and the function of these vignettes as discrete moments in the text. His technique is seen as an illustration of the cross-fertilization between literature and art: word pictures in poetry match mosaic patterning in art.[12] Claudian demonstrates just such consummate craftsmanship throughout his *In Rufinum*. Several of his memorable scenes will be discussed during the course of this article and it will be argued that they have much more movement and power than is suggested by the term 'literary ornamentation'. Witty and entertaining as Claudian's literary fireworks appear to be, they should not distract the modern reader from the seriousness of the poet's intention. A total world picture, not simply a series of entertaining vignettes, emerges from the first book of the poem.

The discursive space of culture

The theory of creative dialogue between texts is central to the approach adopted in this article. It should, perhaps, not need restating that skilled poets exploiting traditional techniques and motifs inherited from prestigious predecessors did not merely recycle

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[10] This sums up the traditional view of Claudian and his limitations. The tendency for even the most sensitive and appreciative commentators not to take Claudian seriously is commented upon by M. Dewar in his review (Bryn Mawr 1991/2, 1–4 at 1) of Gruzelier's *Claudian. De raptu Proserpinae.*

[11] For the reflection and literary re-enactment of pageantry, ceremony and the sense of occasion see MacCormack.

[12] See especially Roberts 1989a.

their borrowings in a sterile and passive fashion.[13] An examination of familiar topics from pagan tradition in Claudian will reveal a fascinating subtext. Past emphases on the wide range of Christian texts available to Claudian and the biblical and hagiographical stories familiar to his audience need to be resurrected, not in order to resolve highly problematic questions about Claudian's own religious leanings, but to emphasize that Christian literature too influenced the cultural expression of the 390s.[14] We impose unnecessary and unhelpful limitations upon ourselves by regarding the poems as operating in a sealed vacuum of pagan literary allusions.

In the visual arts the superimposition of Christian symbolism upon classical iconography is a recognized feature of the later Empire.[15] If, in the area of visual representations, such transformations of inner significance could be achieved without immediately perceptible changes to the outward form, it is feasible to suppose the existence of a similar process at work in literature. Surely, Claudian's audience could quite effortlessly overlay the mythological narrative strands in the *In Rufinum* with a contemporary Christian codification. Claudian's exploitation of pagan figures and motifs in his championing of Stilicho's causes has a political as well as a literary motivation. He chooses, focuses and structures pagan imagery to maximize its overlap with Christian symbolism on the subliminal level. He plays upon the conviction of the audience that evil existed and worked through mortal agents. This was a belief common to Christian and pagan who also shared a conception of supernatural motivations behind human actions.[16]

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[13] 'Reference to the norm obviously does not mean submission to the norm: rather it delimits the common space within which new poetry can both emulate tradition and speak with a fresh voice' (Conté 1986, 81). The contribution of Kristeva and Culver, discussed by Conté in that section, to the conversation which takes place within an 'environment of texts' is creatively developed by Nugent (1990).

[14] Fabbri (1918, 53–4) surveys Claudian's acquaintance with Christian authors and texts.

[15] 'The analogy between art and literature is striking. In both, mythical imagery is neutralized as aesthetic ornamentation and deemed appropriate to pagan and Christian alike' (Roberts 1989b, 336).

[16] There were anxieties which could be exploited. It is assumed that Claudian 'had his finger on the pulse of his audience' (Gruzelier 1990, 302). On the marketing, targetting and distributing of his poetry see Long 1996: 'Claudian's audiences' (195–220) deals with the practicalities and pragmatics of reception as well as speculating on the psychology of propaganda at this time.

The psychology of reception

Claudian simultaneously meets and manipulates the expectations of his audience in a complex train of reception and transmission.[17] The entertainment value of his polemic against Rufinus is something which can be readily captured by us, his modern readers, but paradoxically a close acquaintance with the full range of its comic intertextuality can serve to distance us from its powerful psychological effects. For example, as readers of *In Rufinum* we can make conscious efforts, by a scholarly activity and process, to find influential and parallel passages from previous epics and to reconstruct Claudian's composite cosmos from the literary allusions, but the atmospheric immediacy of scenes such as the one set in a Virgilian Hades is undercut by this necessary process of intellectualization. Our painstaking research has replaced what was more like a poetic reflex for the original audience.

'Generic' scenes in the poem which conjure up earlier literary descriptions would have had strong enough overtones of their culturally canonical predecessors to enjoy a measure of historical actuality. This concept draws in and upon complex theories of blurred boundaries between factual and literary 'pasts'.[18] Did the audience have a sufficiently developed poetic consciousness to accept Claudian's adapted but recognizably Virgilian Underworld as a 'real' place? By means of vivid word pictures the poet could produce sensations equivalent to a virtual or alternative reality experience for his audience and thereby catapult them into his poetically well-attested cosmos. The neuroses of the court about the multi-faceted forms of the barbarian threat could be readily manipulated for political and poetical purposes. Barbarians were regarded as volatile allies easily persuaded to cross vulnerable boundaries of civilization. [19] We can speculate that there was at

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[17] The theory is usefully summarized by Watson (1996, 59–60).

[18] Conté's concept of poetic memory is illuminating in this respect. He argues that *Wiedergebrauchsrede* or reusability of motifs involves not merely a conscious cross-referencing, but also a factualization of the inherited literary world. A literary world becomes an historical world which can be accessed for its historical figures. In this way the poet can produce evidence from outside the text even if that evidence of places, events and speeches comes from another text. The discourse of poetry becomes the validation of history. See Conté 1986, 40–59, esp. 58–9.

[19] Wallace-Hadrill (1989, 22–3) suggests that Stilicho himself could never conquer the suspicions that his Vandal origins aroused. Both Goths and

least the occasional *frisson* of fear in response to Claudian's apocalyptic world view, where demons of darkness and champions of light battled for the empire against a familiar literary backdrop.

In Rufinum: reality transformed

The poem against Rufinus was written after the rival regent's death. The ruler of the East no longer posed a threat to Stilicho, but Eutropius, who rapidly replaced him, was certainly no respecter of Stilicho's policies. Eutropius was able to vilify the western general to such an extent that Stilicho was declared a public enemy during the Gildonic wars. Claudian was to pour vitriol on Eutropius in a later poem and to declare that history was repeating itself as farce, when such a creature wielded power in the empire. Eutropius is granted none of Rufinus' grandeur of evil. It is *In Rufinum* that establishes the tragedy of a divided empire and the heinous nature of anyone who attempts to separate the young brother emperors, Honorius and Arcadius. *In Rufinum* establishes the principle that any successor to Rufinus is a servant of evil and chaos, diverting historical progress, which is the Furies' plan from the outset of the work. It is for this reason that the poem is such a clear piece of agenda-setting, the mission statement of Claudian in his capacity as court poet to Stilicho.

Claudian portrays Rufinus as an alien of demonic stature who has been sent expressly from the powers of Stygian darkness to re-establish their sway in a world made peaceful and prosperous by the Emperor Theodosius. However hated Rufinus was in his lifetime, the facts of his respectable Gallic pedigree could not be altered. He was not, unlike the semi-barbarian Stilicho, forever denied the imperial purple. Nor could Rufinus be attacked for lack of faith and religious zeal. Rufinus was noted for his generous endowments to Christian communities. He was well known for his zealous persecutions of heretics, and had influenced Theodosius in harsh decisions about any signs of religious or political subversion, whereas Stilicho was judged lukewarm in matters of religion by comparison.[20] Therefore the impression had to be

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Vandals were associated with the Arian heresy and he signified its arrival in Rome. See Heather 1991, 184–8 for the Gothic threat at this time.

20 See Bury 1923, 107, whose principal sources are Zosimus, Libanius and

created that Rufinus was merely masquerading as a good and true citizen of the Christian Empire, while Stilicho was in essence the noblest Roman of them all.

After the proem which establishes Stilicho as liberator and protector of the Empire, and the philosophical-sounding preface on an ordered universe redeemed and restored by the justice of Rufinus' fall, the emphasis of the poem is upon the launching of Rufinus upon an unsuspecting world. The debate among the Furies and supporting cast (25–122) explains how the eastern regent's demonic career began and how he ingratiated himself at the court of Theodosius. The suffering of citizens across the empire on and under his authority and the pointlessness of his malice and his manic avarice are rhetorically recited. Only after a lengthy catalogue of Rufinus' evil deeds, inspired by his enormous greed and lust for power, does Stilicho appear as the heroic saviour (259).

The demonic conversion of Rufinus and the near apotheosis of Stilicho were unlikely to change minds in the East about Stilicho's claim to the regency in both halves of the Empire. Claudian could at least reinforce a favourable picture of his patron at the western court. It was, after all, his clear task to persuade his audience of Stilicho's indispensablility in their defence and Stilicho's worthiness to lead their armies and control their policies. The presentation of Stilicho as a guarantor of the sacred past and the only hope for the future established him as part of the cosmic fabric, at a time when the boundaries of that cosmos continued to be coterminous with the boundaries of Roman power. The advent of the hated Rufinus could be explained as a diabolical plot and firmly connected with the perennial problem of order versus chaos in earthly society, a struggle which invariably reflected troubles on the nonterrestrial plane.

Claudian's *In Rufinum* is as much epic as polemic. Claudian is dealing with recent events in his poem, but he is looking for great causes behind and a cosmic dimension to those events. He composes both books with epic narrative as his model and the recent past as his subject.[21] Claudian is keen to lend legendary status to the fall and destruction of Rufinus and to parade Stilicho in the

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Palladius.

[21] For *In Rufinum* as epic narrative see Nesselrath 1991. Long (1996, 44–8) also discusses the fusion of epic and invective.

literary equivalent of a triumph. *In Rufinum* could be translated as 'The Battle against Rufinus', a title which suppresses its polemical aspects on the satirical level but enhances the seriousness of the threat from the defeated enemy and the Empire's narrow escape from destruction.

Techniques of conversion

The poem begins with a reference to and the referential framework of an epic combat, that of Apollo versus Python (1–14). It soon becomes apparent that the span of Claudian's poetic themes is extremely ambitious. The contemplative interlude between the proem and the main narrative evokes the creation of the universe, the first principles and sustaining mechanisms of its being. This preface is a philosophical underpinning to the persistent theme of *discordia* in that it transfers the battle for order and justice from the mythological plane to the material workings of the universe. The subject matter and the treatment of it by Claudian reinforce the epic framework of the poem.[22]

In the proem Claudian recreates the epic flavour and temporal compass of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Book One, recalling his poetic predecessor's literary time-frame, when the world was young and possessed a fundamentally fragile identity. Python emerged from the reconstituted earth after the Flood that Jupiter visited upon the impious race of humans (*Met.* 1.416–51). Python was born of a new chaos and not likely to be beneficial to a world struggling to reassert its old shape and individual landscapes. Claudian depicts Python as suppressor of the natural flow and of the natural growth of things.

Phoebeo domitus Python cum decidit arcu
  membraque Cirrhaeo fudit anhela iugo
qui spiris tegeret montes, hauriret hiatu
  flumina, sanguineis tangeret astra iubis:
iam liber Parnassus erat nexuque soluto
  coeperat erecta surgere fronde nemus
concussaque diu spatiosis tractibus orni

[22] In other words, Claudian invokes a variety of generic models and places them within the overarching epic form of his poem. For the ethical and aesthetic implications of his universe and his commitment to the culture of Greek philosophical thought see Funke 1985.

securas uentis explicuere comas
et qui uipereo spumauit saepe ueneno
Cephisos nitidis purior ibat aquis. (*In Rufinum* 1.1–10)

From the moment Python fell, conquered by the bow of Phoebus, and poured out his panting limbs over the ridge of Delphi—Python who could cover mountains with his coils, drain rivers at a gulp and touch the stars with his bloodstained crest—Parnassus was free and the forest, its bonds unentwined, started to stretch out its foliage and raise itself up. The mountain ashes, long buffeted by the snake's winding coils, unfurled their carefree tresses to the winds and Cephisus, who had frequently foamed with the viper's venom, coursed cleaner with waters aglow.

Python's enormous snaky bulk prefigures the size and unslakeable thirst of Rufinus who emerges as an equally monstrous pollution destined to cover and consequently depopulate large areas of the empire. Megaera indicates that Rufinus has an unslakeable thirst for gold in her proud presentation of him at the Furies' convention. He could drink the rivers and their gold deposits dry (101–4). This boast is borne out when Rufinus is let loose upon the peaceful world of Theodosius. Rufinus is compared with the sea-god Nereus as he exercises his power in human affairs, achieving the equivalent devastation of natural resources.

ac uelut innumeros amnes accedere Nereus
nescit et undantem quamuis hinc hauriat Histrum,
hinc bibat aestiuum septeno gurgite Nilum,
par semper similisque manet. (*In Rufinum* 1.183–6)

And just as Nereus is unaware of how he swells with innumerable tributaries, and even though he drains the watery Danube on one side and on the other drinks the summer Nile, with its seven mouths' swollen streams, he stays ever the same and unchanging.

When Rufinus' death is described in Book Two, both heaven and earth are liberated from the choking evil of his presence. Like Python, he has weighed down civilization with his bulk; hence the sense of release at the demise of Rufinus:

Senserunt conuexa necem tellusque nefandum
amolitur onus iam respirantibus astris. (*In Rufinum* 2.454–5)

The heavenly vault felt his death, and now the stars are breathing freely, for the earth is thrusting the accursed burden away.

Clearly Python is Rufinus; the snake imagery for Rufinus is sustained throughout the first book (92–6, 165, 225, 302) and his general associations with the Furies who occupy the first scene

after the philosophical preface will be constantly reinforced as the narrative progresses. The Underworld conference (25–123) and the introduction of Rufinus in that context work on several different levels of character assassination. It is in this environment where the denizens of Hades plan a triumphant return to earth that Rufinus is heralded as the secret weapon, the means by which they can reclaim the territory lost to them during the Golden Age of Theodosius.

Rufinus' association with the forces of evil and cosmic upheaval ensures his transformation from Roman citizen and devout Christian into an alien heretic and servant of the forces of destruction. He will be the instrument of the powers of darkness whom Theodosius had exiled from the earth (*arcet ... Theodosius terris*, 50–1). The barbarian hordes who periodically spilled over into the terrritory of the Empire were regularly described in terms of floods and tornadoes and viewed as the bringers of cosmic upheaval.[23] Claudian's picture of the Furies and their entourage of ills and griefs as confined within their hellish chamber, overcrowded and desperate to break out once more from their proper boundaries, is an extremely powerful one (25–74). Like the barbarians, Allecto's brood are a marginalized tribe making ready for a surge against the civilized world, attempting to derail the historical advance ushered in by the reign of Theodosius. The release of hellish forces to arrest human progress has a literary precedent in Virgil. In Book Six of the *Aeneid*, the hero Aeneas visits the Underworld for a crucial confirmation of his mission and a vision of the future Rome in all its greatness and painful progress towards world domination. The opening of Book Seven, however, sees Juno delaying the peaceful settlement of the Trojans on Italian soil. Allecto is summoned from Hades to whip up hostilities, reminding the reader that boundaries can be crossed for negative purposes in both directions.[24] This genre scene packs an added punch when contemporary dangers of the period are recalled. The Furies and

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[23] Christiansen 1969, 76–83. The point is also emphasized by Gnilka (1973).

[24] The most telling treatment to date of the conflation of Underworld and Upperworld and the repercussions of their psychological and cultural commerce is to be found in Hardie 1993. In ch.3 'Heaven and Hell', he deals with journeys which cross the boundaries and the dangers for those who undertake them either physically or symbolically.

all the brood are presented as supernatural nomads, galvanized to break out from their lengthy confinement beneath the earth.

complentur uario ferrata sedilia coetu
toruaque collectis stipatur curia monstris.
Allecto stetit in mediis uulgusque tacere
iussit et obstantes in tergum reppulit angues
perque umeros errare dedit. tum corde sub imo
inclusam rabidis patefecit uocibus iram:
'Sicine tranquillo produci saecula cursu,
sic fortunatas patiemur uiuere gentes?
quae noua corrupit nostros clementia mores?
quo rabies innata perit? quid inania prosunt
uerbera? quid facibus nequiquam cingimur atris?
heu nimis ignauae, quas Iuppiter arcet Olympo,
Theodosius terris. (*In Rufinum* 1.39–51)

So, the iron seats are filled with the motley company and the grim Senate-chamber is thronged with this collection of Nature's aberrations. Allecto stood in their midst and commanded the crowd to be silent. She flung back her obtrusive snaky locks and left them to meander over her shoulders. Then, in crazed tones, she disclosed the anger suppressed in the depths of her heart: 'Are we thus to countenance the centuries unfolding in untroubled course and the peoples living in such a state of prosperity? What unprecedented clemency has subverted our characters? Is the fury that is your birthright lost and gone? What use are our scourges if they lie idle? Why girdle on black torches with no purpose in view? Oh, the pity of it all, you utterly gutless crew, whom Jupiter has expelled from Olympus and Theodosius has exiled from earth.'

Then follows a description of a Golden Age of justice and prosperity (51–9), particularly effective because it comes from the mouth of a sworn enemy, to whom such a state of affairs is anathema. This is clearly a witty and sustained reversal of rhetorical norms which has its humorous side. The skill of Claudian's technique has been illuminated by his commentators. Less notice has been taken of the imagery of confinement which recurs in this scene. The overcrowding of the chamber is one contributory factor to the sense of claustrophobia. Allecto's breaking out into anger is also a sign that incarceration of emotion can no longer be borne. This is a first step towards freedom for the Furies. In ironic contrast, Allecto bridles with horror at the sight of *Iustitia* in person, voluntarily ending her self-imposed exile from earth and releasing the laws from prison (56–7). Allecto ends her impassioned speech like one possessed and with a frenzied vision of liberty, nothing short

of storming the heavens and confounding the very fabric of the universe.

It is left to Megaera to instil some order and rational thinking into the company. She produces a plan which will open earth's portals to the forgathered fiends. Rufinus is introduced by Megaera as human ally and fifth columnist. As an infant, he often slithered into her lap and was licked into shape by Megaera's serpentine hair. He developed a close affinity with her serpent tresses: *paruus reptauit in isto | saepe sinu teneroque per ardua colla uolutus | ubera quaesiuit fletu linguisque trisulcis | mollia lambentes finxerunt membra cerastae* . 'Often as a small babe he crept into this bosom of mine and, entwined around my high neck, sought my breasts with a child's wailing. My serpents licked his malleable limbs into shape with their three-forked tongues' (93–6). What could be a charming picture of the crawling child becomes a sinister prediction of Rufinus' snaky attributes.

Claudian does not simply cast doubt upon the true origins of Rufinus; he transforms him from his very infancy into a nursling of Megaera, his surrogate mother. The perversion of panegyric techniques is a strategy of invective strikingly illustrated here with the description of the enemy's wet-nursing. The epic hero is frequently depicted as being suckled by something supernatural and the presence of snakes at birth can be confirmatory of heroic, even divine, potential. It heralded the arrival of a human destined for great things, a Hercules, an Alexander, or even an Augustus, (Suetonius, *Aug.* 94). Megaera predicts a famous future to her pupil if only he has the energy to pursue it: *toto dominabere mundo,* 'you will be master of the universe!' (143).

Megaera informs her hellish sisters that Rufinus has the capacity to cause rifts in the most secure relationships and strife in the closest of families, and that he can persuade even the wisest to make disastrously damaging decisions. In this way Claudian clearly aligns Rufinus with the notorious attributes of Megaera herself. Claudian's audiences could also receive this image with its Christian connotations. Megaera and Rufinus can be seen as the twofold serpent sent to destroy Theodosius' Eden. Rufinus, in reality an appointed official of good provincial stock and espousing the orthodox Christianity, is reconstructed by means of divine machinery. Claudian has bestowed a new set of origins upon the enemy, with an eloquent silence surrounding Rufinus' actual

human parentage, filling the vacuum of his early years with an elaborate fiction and suggesting a demonic and divisive fiend lurking beneath the devout and loyal servant of the Christian Roman empire.

Megaera's proud boast about her pupil's skills of subversion (97–115)—and she at least has thought ahead about the counter-attack on the forces of progress—immediately allies Rufinus to the alien hordes of Hades and simultaneously to the very barbarian tribes with whom he is to show a natural affinity.[25] These are peoples liminal to any civilized existence; they drink blood, enjoy unnatural relations and indulge in impious slaughter (310–31). The connections between the Furies and the barbarians of the outer reaches complete the triangle, Megaera, Rufinus and the alien threat. Once Rufinus has been advertised as the mortal agent who will provide the passageway for the fiends to the light above, his later function as facilitator to human demons, as inviter of the barbarian to cross boundaries and join in the slaughter (308–22), comes as no surprise. His affinity with the barbarians is spelt out again in Book 2.78–85.

The very presence of the Fury upon earth—she has broken out of Hades with considerable panache and flamboyance—signifies that the battle between *pietas* and *furor* must recommence on earth. The age-old conflict between light and dark, the upper and nether regions, has officially begun and it is this energetic burst from Hell that announces 'the starting-point of a new movement', and signifies the restless chaos which inevitably accompanies the encroachment of Hades upon an unsuspecting earth.[26] It is equally fitting that the murdered Rufinus' journey to Hell takes the conclusion of the poem back to where he and all the evils belong (Rufinus' death is savoured in Book 2.454–94). Claudian's Underworld is conveniently transformed at that point into the alternative Virgilian model and becomes a place where justice and punish-

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25 On Rufinus as a kindred spirit of the barbarians, exhibiting the same lust for gold and willingness to be bribed and assuming all the features of excessive behaviour traditionally attributed to them by Rome—becoming a barbarian in fact—see Potz 1990.

26 'Hell is likely to be the starting-point of a new movement', Hardie 1993, 60. Hardie's interpretations of the role of Hades and the function of the Furies in post-Virgilian epic is particularly relevant to Claudian. Hardie does not encompass the later Empire in his study, but his exposition of Lucan and Statius lends a new dimension to Claudian's reworking of their demonic personnel and the poetic atmospheres which surround them.

ment have their place too. The beginning of Claudian's narrative with the unleashing of the Furies recalls Book Seven of the *Aeneid*, but the positive role for Hades is closer in conception to Virgil's Book Six. Rufinus is to find retribution, not allies, in the Underworld and this might suggest that, in one last irony, his demise has restored the proper balance beneath as well as above the earth.

The motivating of Rufinus

Megaera sets all the chaos and corruption in motion with an epiphanic encounter. Rufinus is given the hero treatment, complete with confirmatory miracle, to bribe him into assisting the Furies' grand plan: *dixerat, et niueae (mirum!) coepere columnae | ditari subitoque trabes lucere metallo.* 'She finished her speech, and, amazingly, the snow-white pillars started to display riches and the beams suddenly gleamed with gold.' (162–3) There is a great deal of recycling of familiar themes in this scene but even this comically charged supernatural visitation does not necessarily aim simply to entertain the audience, who would recognize skilfully reprised and reversed motifs. A supernatural presence, whether of fiends or angels, was considered a very likely occurrence when human affairs were seriously in need of resolution and divine assistance. It is an obligatory device for any epic with the standard divine machinery, whether the personnel of that machinery acts for better or for worse.

The devilish moment of mischief, when Rufinus and all his wiles are set into motion, explains how this fiend came to power by supernatural deceit and ingenuity. It is hardly necessary for Megaera to possess Rufinus; simply to invoke his essential nature is enough. The energizing of a capacity for evil which has so far lain dormant recalls a number of epic figures who, as Hardie has shown, have an ambivalent relationship with *furor*. In this scene, it is not simply a case of Claudian drawing upon Lucan's description of Caesar as a representative of the Furies. As Hardie points out in his discussion of the energy of Hell, Caesar himself acts out the part of Virgil's Turnus and Silius' Hannibal.[27]

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[27] Hardie 1993, 38–9.

The Midas allusion at 165–6 allows Claudian the opportunity to show Rufinus as subject to low passions with none of the Roman *firmitas* of the upright Stilicho, an easy tool in fact for the demonic forces of Hell, and enticed like an animal by the Fury's bait. The entrapment of Rufinus should come as no surprise, given Megaera's unmistakable presentation of Rufinus as irredeemably voracious from birth. It seems perhaps less logical to interrupt the narrative at 196 in order to remonstrate with Rufinus, as if in an attempt to turn him back from the fateful Midas-like course he is pursuing.[28] Claudian introduces yet another Golden Age model at this point, however, the idealized Roman rural past, *uiuitur melius exiguo*, 'better to live within modest means' (214), as a further contrast with the luxurious lifestyle of the, by implication, non-Roman Rufinus.

Rufinus swells with greed at the confirmatory miracle provided by Megaera at 165 and then proceeds to fulfil his part of the bargain by worming (*subrepsit*) his way into the court of Theodosius at 177. The snake-like Rufinus works his destruction by using his incomparable arts of persuasion on an emperor who, in normal circumstances, would have been incorruptible. Persuasive serpents would strike a chord in a Christian court. Claudian knows he can rely upon an intrinsic overlap with biblical imagery, however overtly pagan the ambience of the poem may be.

The Fury's snakes and their role in the upbringing of Rufinus ensure that he is connected with the eternal enemies of Rome and its Empire and that he has crossed boundaries which should have been forbidden to him. The *draco* with the human face had developed from the symbol of the barbarian who frequently counterposed the Roman eagle in earlier imperial iconography. The barbarian serpent appeared in the triumphal regalia of emperors where it might be trampled underfoot by the Roman ruler, although it should not be forgotten that snake iconography appeared on the standards of Roman legions as a neutral symbol for any kind of potency. The Christian concept of the snake, highly coloured by the seminal role of Satan in the garden of Eden, harmonized very easily with this kind of pagan imagery. It has

[28] Even here, we might speculate upon Christian associations, for the phrase *quo ruis* / *quo ruitis* becomes the rallying call to the faithful when they wander from the paths of righteousness. See Prudentius, *Psychomachia* 351–2 and Nugent's comments (1985, 44–5).

been demonstrated that any disruptive heresy and its followers, any band in fact that was capable of dividing the faith or fabric of the Roman world, could be portrayed as a poisonous snake.[29]

The arrival of Rufinus at the court of Theodosius is surreptitious. In normal circumstances a divinely chosen figure on his way to high office would come announced to the imperial capital in a glorious arrival scene.[30] Instead, Rufinus sneaks into the city after passing places strongly associated with predatory enterprises (the voyage of the *Argo* is pointedly mentioned at 172–3), and before making what is implied to be an unannounced entry (*ut longum permensum iter ductusque maligno* | *stamine fatorum claram subrepsit in aulam*: 'When he had completed his long journey, led by the malign thread of fate, he slithered into the famous palace' 176–7). The style of Rufinus' entry marks the beginning of his equally unorthodox promotion to power. He is, however, guided by a malign thread of fate.[31]

The metamorphosis of Stilicho

Stilicho emerges as the rock on which the elementally evil Rufinus will founder at 267–72. Depicting Stilicho in this way (*et inlisa montem circumtonat unda*, 'he (Rufinus) thunders around the cliff (Stilicho) but the force of his waves is shattered,' 272) surely implies the famous biblical metaphor of Peter as the rock on which the Church will be built. The image simultaneously fulfils the

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[29] The iconography is carefully discussed by Courcel 1966, 343–53.

[30] MacCormack (212–13) uses Claudian's panegyrics to illustrate the prevalence of scenes depicting the welcome arrival of the emperor. The reversal becomes even more pointed when the words of the Constantine panegyric, quoted by MacCormack, are recalled: 'You were called to save the commonwealth by the verdict of Heaven even at that time ... when your sudden arrival lit upon us and it seemed that you had come, not on the public post, but by some vehicle of the gods'.

[31] 'Valerius' Jupiter approves of the sea-journey because he wishes to eliminate the idleness of "his father's reign" (1.500), that is to say the absence of toil and labour under Saturn, in the Golden Age' (Hardie 1993, 83). This whole section in Hardie, discussing perceptions of the first seafaring vessel in the ancients' cultural history, lends deeper significance to Claudian's allusion to the *Argo*'s enterprise. Rather than being just a 'decorative' piece of geographical colour, it underlines the end of innocence and the beginning of moral decline, a perversion of the Theodosian age of gold to one which Ovid cynically describes in *Ars Amatoria*, a world where gold buys anything and anyone.

promise of the preface. Presented there as an equivalent first to Apollo, destroyer of Python, then to a Herculean figure (also renowned for confronting snakes from the cradle to the grave) who is called upon to shoulder the burden of both parts of the empire and sustain cosmic equilibrium on behalf of the two young emperors, Stilicho moves from the mythological to the historical stage at this point in the narrative. The relentless theme running through Claudian's poetry is Stilicho's role as guarantor of the cultural continuum, his championship of Rome's heroic past and his preservation of an empire in danger of disintegration. The figure of Stilicho becomes a paradigm of Roman-ness, a true heir of past literary models of excellence, among whom we find stern and upright consuls in the company of approved emperors. Another crucial factor in this picture of excessive *pietas* and Roman strength is the support Stilicho has from key deities in the pagan pantheon. Mars prepares to do battle at Stilicho's side (340–53).

Famous Greek heroes compare unfavourably with Stilicho. Like Virgil's Augustus, Stilicho's mission has enormous historical significance and wide-ranging repercussions. His task in protecting and preserving the Roman empire makes Perseus, Hercules and Bellerophon look very much like local heroes:

> Inachius Rubro perhibetur in aequore Perseus
> Neptuni domuisse pecus, sed tutior alis:
> te non penna uehit; rigida cum Gorgone Perseus:
> tu non uipereo defensus crine Medusae;
> illum uilis amor suspensae uirginis egit:
> te Roma salus. taceat superata uetustas,
> Herculeos conferre tuis iam desinat actus.
> una Cleonaeum pascebat silua leonem;
> Arcadiae saltum uastabat dentibus unum
> saeuus aper, tuque o compressa matre rebellans
> non ultra Libyae fines, Antaee, nocebas,
> solaque fulmineo resonabat Creta iuuenco
> Lernaeamque uirens obsederat hydra paludem.
> hoc monstrum non una palus, non una tremebat
> insula, sed Latia quicquid dicione subactum
> uiuit, et a primis Ganges horrebat Hiberis.
> hoc neque Geryon triplex nec turbidus Orci
> ianitor aequabit nec is concurrat in unum
> uis hydrae Scyllaeque fames et flamma Chimaerae.
>
> (*In Rufinum* 1.278–96)

They say that Inachian Perseus subdued the calf of Neptune in the Red Sea, but he had more safety in wings. No wing lifted you up. Perseus had the petrifying Gorgon but you were not protected by

> the viperous hair of a Medusa. The trivial passion for a girl in bondage spurred him on, but your goal was the salvation of Roma. *Let bygone ages admit defeat and stay silent.* From this moment on, cease to compare your deeds to those of Hercules. A single wood nurtured the Nemean lion. Just one glade of Arcadia was ravaged by the fangs of a wild boar. You, Antaeus, indefatigable as long as you had mother there to hold on to, you did no damage beyond the boundaries of Libya. The flame-snorting bull pounded no further than Crete. The evergreen Hydra had taken up residence in a marshy pond at Lerna. This monster terrorized not one swamp, not one island, but whatever lives subject to Latium's sway; the Ganges and the Ebro, even their outer reaches were quaking. Nothing could rival this prodigy, not the three-bodied Geryon, nor the ferocious doorkeeper of Orcus, not the combined force of the Hydra, the appetite of Scylla and the flame of the Chimaera.

This passage has been quoted at length because it is an obvious expansion of Virgil's homage to the achievements of Augustus (*Aeneid* 6.791–805) who is placed above Hercules and Bacchus as saviour of a vast empire. Claudian makes the lofty comparisons only to undercut them immediately. There is a self-consciousness about these allusions, which suggests that the poet is exploiting them as clichés: hence the key statement, borrowed for this article's title, *taceat superata uetustas*, 'Let bygone ages admit defeat and stay silent'. An alternative and extra-textual translation could be 'let the well-worn figures of myth at last realize that they have outlived their usefulness in the medium of panegyric'. An added humiliation to their loss of heroic status, now that Stilicho is on the scene, is their devaluation as literary allusions now Claudian is active in the world of poetry. The world has moved on from celebrating the liberation of little ponds or small communities and such exploits are hardly worthy parallels for the universal battle between dark and light.[32]

From the very opening of the poem, Stilicho's role as liberator and saviour has been heralded by the poet. Just as Apollo had liberated the Muses after his great combat, Claudian the poet is able once more to call for divine inspiration now that Rufinus has been wiped from the face of the earth. The court is implied in the *caterua sacra* ('holy gathering') of the preface (16), when the bard is

[32] Rufinus, *origo prima mali* ('first cause of evil'), continues to haunt Roman history in the guise of *Discordia. In Eutropium* 2.539–51 reiterates his cosmic capacity for causing chaos.

granted the power to sing of Stilicho's victory. Stilicho's role in restoring justice and peace to the body politic is comparable to the restoration of order and boundaries throughout the universe, and aligns him with those who preserve the integrity of the cosmos. At the end of the preface (14–18) Stilicho, it is claimed, has steadied the world, not only holding the balance of power but proving himself worthy while still alive of taking a place in the constellations, a fulcrum among the stars. Indeed, he is a necessary equilibrium, steadying the world for the brother emperors. (*qui stabilem seruans Augustis fratribus orbem,* 17).

The philosophical dimension

The counterpoising of Stilicho to Rufinus on this lofty plane has a bearing on Claudian's introduction to the narrative, which has to be reassessed for its affirmation of faith in cosmic design. The proem's economically expressed cosmogony connects the historical aberration of the rise of Rufinus with, by implication, the return to primordial chaos. Once Rufinus has been punished for his crimes, it proves that there is and always has been a universal *sympatheia* or harmony; boundaries are in place, thresholds are restored on earth and the fabric of the cosmos continues to be held together by fundamental *foedera,* the binding compacts of interstate relationships.

Rufinus matches in earthly affairs the philosophical concept of the tyranny of structurelessness. He is addressed as a madman by the poet at 196; his *furor,* his lack of control, seems to be a standard characterization for the subject of an invective. Rufinus' crazed lust for gold propels him ever forward to ultimate destruction. However, there is another dimension to this description of Rufinus. Claudian's address to Rufinus emphasizes the similarity between this human tornado and the speed of anarchic particles. It evokes, at a key point in the poem, the parallel world of chaotic elements presented as one version of reality in the proem (16–19). *Quo ruis,* 'where are you rushing to' at 196 also reinforces the concept of Rufinus as a river or torrent and picks up on the image of Nereus and the Nile at 183–5. The elemental energy of Rufinus can only be stopped by someone with the stature of Stilicho. Lines 269–72, which have already been discussed for their Christian and heroic

dimensions, also suggest that the western regent is capable of restoring *fides* and *foedera* to a world on the edge of disintegration.

Rufinus was possibly anticipating a crowning ceremony when he was torn apart at the review of the troops in Constantinople. It is uncertain who engineered the savagery of the army but for Claudian's purposes this was a very fitting end for one who was himself in the business of division. The army's protest at being dispersed and detached from their beloved leader, Stilicho, is expressed significantly in terms of an indivisible body which Rufinus is forcing apart. The eastern and western troops speak with one voice:

> 'non patiar. semperne Getis discordia nostra
> proderit? en iterum belli ciuilis imago!
> quid consanguineas acies, quid diuidis olim
> concordes aquilas? *non dissociabile corpus*
> *coniunctum sumus.* te qua libet ire sequemur.' (*In Rufinum* 2.235–9)

> 'I will not tolerate it. Are the Getae to gain, as ever, from our disunity? Look again upon the spectre of civil war! Why do you sunder battle-lines of blood relatives, why separate standards displayed in traditional harmony? *We are indivisible, created as one body.* We shall follow you wherever it is your pleasure to go.'

The address is to Stilicho who, in dutifully obeying the orders of Arcadius, is submitting to the machinations of Rufinus. The combination of first person singular and first person plural could in this case be designed to emphasize that the collective feels as one, not merely to vary the speech with the informal 'we' for 'I'. The reality of military solidarity was likely to be very different,[33] but the outburst is one more poetic validation of Stilicho's leadership and charisma. Just as Rufinus swore to follow the Fury wherever she wished to lead him, the troops express their faith in Stilicho. United in their affection for the western commander but forced to abandon him, these men draw attention to Rufinus' special talent as destroyer of *fides* and of the natural links which hold together phenomena in the natural and human world. Thus the transformation and elevation of Stilicho in the poem is on a cosmic par in its proportions with the portrayal of the arch fiend in the East. So powerful is the picture of Rufinus as *Discordia* and so

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[33] O'Flynn (1983, 28–35) concludes that Claudian protests too much about the loyalty of the troops. They were a disparate band with a strong barbarian contingent and had only recently fought against each other at the Frigidus.

vivid the description of the destruction and dissipation of his negative energy, that it was reworked by Prudentius in his Christian poem, *Psychomachia.* Prudentius clearly found in the dismember ment of Rufinus an apt model for his description of *Discordia* herself.[34] Claudian intended from the outset to portray eastern regents as wicked opponents of Theodosius' last wish, namely that the empire should be united under one protector, Stilicho.

Conclusion

Claudian's defence and justification of this keystone in his patron's policies was always difficult to sustain. Stilicho eventually resigned himself to the fact that his claim to be *parens* and protector to both of Theodosius' sons was never to be accepted in Constantinople. However, Claudian's first foray for Stilicho is a fascinating attempt to place his patron's self-styled role against an ethical as well as an epic background. Stilicho's barbarian stock debarred him from ever wearing the imperial purple but being father-figure to the two emperors was a very desirable compensation. His own relationship to the god Mars, father of Rome, is heralded by Claudian when Stilicho steps onto the battlefield. The western general's loyalty and *pietas* towards the royal family singles him out as utterly Roman in character and action. Only Stilicho can restore the empire and stem the tide of invading aliens, preserving the essence of Roman identity.

It should be emphasized just how important this identity was to both the pagan and Christian aristocracy in the West. The imagery of *In Rufinum* 1 is of a composite character because its overtly pagan literary formulas are already implicitly shared by Christian narratives. Demons and the saviours who dispose of them immediately create a common parlance in a society of distinct and often

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[34] For an illuminating and thorough exposition of the role and corrupting influence of *Discordia* figures see Malamud 1989, 48–57. She suggests an additional layer of irony in the scene where the divisive Rufinus is dismembered, focusing on it as a moment of mimic martyrdom and pointing to Rufinus' Gallic preoccupation with martyrology. An alternative reading of both the Prudentius and the Claudian is the immense satisfaction the ancient spectator, pagan and Christian alike, would have enjoyed at seeing the truly and unequivocally wicked meet their just deserts in a punishment which actually recalled their crimes.

hostile faiths which, nevertheless, could present a single cultural face to the threat of barbarian invasion.

The highly derivative nature of Claudian's poetry is one of its greatest strengths. It is only a partial illumination of a poet's skill if his techniques are not examined simultaneously for distinctive resonances in each of their literary reincarnations. In an effort to gain access to the era we tend to respond to the literary function of the Claudianic conceits. Scholarly appreciation of and engagement with the poetic coinage of the time should enhance, not obscure, the overall impact of the poem on its intended audience and readership. By acknowledging the psychological effectiveness of Claudian's world picture in the *In Rufinum* the modern reader can properly appreciate the poet's skill in remodelling the work of his classical predecessors. It is time to reinterpret Claudian's imagery with a clearer focus on what he achieved in the locus of his society rather than assuming that his imagery functioned only in the genus of a closed literary space.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

REPRESENTING THE PAST, REDEFINING THE FUTURE: SIDONIUS APOLLINARIS' PANEGYRICS OF AVITUS AND ANTHEMIUS[1]

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Introduction

This paper will examine some of the underlying themes in the imperial consular panegyrics of Sidonius Apollinaris, themes which, although ostensibly commonplace, carried great resonance in the contemporary political situation. Traditionally the political alliances which the Romans forged with other nations were based on the premise of long-term Roman military strength and superiority, but by the fifth century the western empire was continually faced with the growing threat of barbarian unrest and invasion on more than one front. This threat was coupled with internal instability caused by power struggles between the commanders-in-chief of the army, who were often themselves barbarians, and a succession of short-lived emperors. Each crisis was countered by measures which may have seemed expedient at the moment but which failed to provide a lasting resolution to a chaotically fluctuating political situation. One of these measures was a series of alliances with Visigothic rulers in the hope that these would control the unrest and rising power of the Visigoths and act as a countermeasure to the threat posed by the Vandals. Sidonius had to present these measures in such a way that they brought credit, some promise of political stability and the hope that the Roman glory of the past could be regained in the future. He also had to acknowledge the anxiety and prejudice which such

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[1] A version of some of the material in this essay appeared in my doctoral thesis, 'Sidonius Apollinaris' *Carmina* 1 and 2: A commentary' (Ph.D., London, 1997).

measures instilled in an increasingly entrenched Roman aristocracy.

In order to illustrate his representation of the emperor as the ideal hero within a framework which inspired in his audience a sense of solidarity and patriotism, Sidonius drew on examples of past leaders, mainly from the Republican and early imperial eras. However, the fundamental political changes which had taken place in the intervening period undermined the validity of these examples for the present. I shall argue that Sidonius did not ignore this fact but consciously aimed to reconcile past and present in order to suggest a future which he hoped would be stronger for containing elements of both. Examination of these themes will aid attempts to understand how late-antique society perceived its relationship with the past and confronted its future.

Context and corpus

During the fifth century the western empire faced growing threats on two fronts. In the early decades the Goths, who were not a unified people, but a number of war-bands under separate leaders, had settled in Gaul and had been recognized by Rome as *foederati*, 'allies'. That alliance, however, was never strong and, on the part of the Goths, tended to depend on expediency and the Goths' loyalty to individual Roman commanders or magistrates. The rulers of the Visigoths, Theoderic I (AD 418–51) and Theoderic II (AD 453–66), had given their support to the Roman government in the West, but in AD 466 Theoderic II was killed and succeeded by his brother Euric, who took advantage of the imperial vacancy in the West to attempt to extend his sphere of power over a larger area of Gaul.[2]

During the same period the western empire (and, indeed to a lesser extent, the eastern empire also) had suffered for many years from attacks by the Vandal Geiseric. Geiseric became king of the Vandals in 429 on the death of his brother. At that time the Vandals were settled in southern Spain and possibly Mauretania Tingetana. They were invited by Boniface, the Count of Africa, to

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[2] For an outline of the activities of the Goths in the fifth century see Anderson 1963, xxviii; Heather 1996, ch.7; Harries 1994, ch.3; for Euric's policy of expansion, ibid. 142.

support his rebellion, and in 429 the whole Vandal nation crossed to Africa. An ally not to be trusted, Geiseric proceeded to establish an independent kingdom, based at Carthage, and resisted all attempts by the Roman empire to overthrow him. On the death of Valentinian III in 455, he sacked Rome and although he suffered minor setbacks, such as naval defeat by Ricimer off Sicily in 456, the large expeditionary forces mounted against him, that of Majorian in 460, and of Anthemius in 468, were repeatedly defeated. Geiseric was a constant source of anxiety to the empire, particularly the western half, throughout his long rule on account of his direct raids on Roman territory and also because of the threat he posed to the grain supply. One of the problems with which Sidonius had to deal as city prefect in 468 was a food shortage, brought about by what, at that time, was a state of open war with the Vandals (*Ep.* 1.10.2). Geiseric remained undefeated up to his death in 477.

Sidonius Apollinaris was born *c.*430, a year after Geiseric became Vandal king, into one of the leading families in Gaul: both his grandfather and his father had been praetorian prefect of Gaul. He married Papianilla, the daughter of Avitus, a member of a distinguished Gallo-Roman family who had held a high military command (possibly Master of Foot and Horse) and had been praetorian prefect of Gaul, and he accompanied his father-in-law to Rome when the latter took up the emperorship in 455. It was in Rome that Sidonius delivered the panegyric for Avitus on the occasion of the emperor's consular accession in the following January. At some point during Avitus' fifteen-month reign Sidonius returned to Gaul, and in 458 delivered a panegyric to the new emperor Majorian at Lyons. He subsequently appears to have lived a provincial life until 467, when as a leading and influential member of the Romano-Gallic aristocracy, he was called upon to present a petition to the new emperor, Anthemius.[3] After the recitation of

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[3] Sidonius gives no details about the nature of this mission; Sivan (1989, 92) conjectures that, as Sidonius refers to the embassy as Arvernian rather than Gallic, it was to petition for the acquittal of Arvandus, the praetorian prefect of Gaul, who was facing trial for malfeasance of office. Arvandus had alienated a large part of the Gallic nobility by his high-handed behaviour, but seems to have continued to receive support in some areas, notably the Auvergne. (Sidonius appears to be unaware beforehand that a charge of treason would also be brought forward.) Alternatively, Harries (1994, 144) suggests that the mission was to ascertain the future policies of the new emperor with regard to the defence of Gaul, as there was doubt among the Arverni concerning the

his panegyric (January 468) he was appointed prefect of the city but returned to Gaul by 469. A little later, although he himself gives no details, he was appointed bishop of the Arverni, with his seat at Clermont, a post for which his status and experience as an administrator were as valuable as expertise or a vocation in ecclesiastical matters, if not more so. He experienced the periodic devastation of Clermont and expressed his bitterness at the handing over of the Auvergne region to the Visigoths in 475 (*Ep.* 7.7). He was confined at Livia (modern Capendu, near Carcassonne) but eventually returned to his see, where he is thought to have remained for the rest of his life.[4]

The imperial poems (*Carm.* 1–8) were published, in reverse chronological order, soon after the delivery of the panegyric to Anthemius in January 468.[5] In addition to these, Sidonius' extant work consists of a collection of sixteen occasional poems, varying in length from four lines to five hundred, and nine books of prose letters, some of which contain poems; in both poetry and prose he illustrates the tensions in his world. Although he was a Christian and became a bishop, in the material and form of the greater part of his verse he follows the classical literary tradition; in the verse collection the only exception is *Carm.* 16, a poem of thanksgiving, addressed to Bishop Faustus, which is Sidonius' only explicit acknowledgement of Christianity. In this poem he states that he is laying aside traditional sources of inspiration, Apollo, the Muses and Orpheus, in favour of a guiding spirit more appropriate to the occasion (1–5). In all other poems in the collection he follows the conventions of his pagan literary predecessors to such an extent that if these were our sole evidence, his Christianity might be in doubt.

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intentions of the Visigothic ruler, Euric. These theories are equally attractive: Sidonius was certainly a friend and supporter of Arvandus and was distressed and embarrassed by the outcome of Arvandus' trial which might have caused him to leave Rome before the end of his prefectureship (cf. *Ep.* 1.7). In the absence of specific information, it is debatable whether Sidonius' petition to the new emperor would have involved an internal matter, the trial of the prefect of Gaul, or external affairs, the defence of Gaul. Given the projected campaign against Geiseric, it might seem more likely that there was concern that the Gothic threat might be forgotten in the excitement of the anticipated overthrow of the Vandals.

4 For Sidonius' life and times see Harries 1994, which to a large extent supersedes C.E. Stevens, *Sidonius Apollinaris and his Age* (Oxford, 1933).

5 For publication see Loyen 1960, I xxxf.

Style and genre

The main stylistic sources of influence on Sidonius' work are Statius for his verse and Pliny and Symmachus for his prose; the use he makes of these precedents and the characteristics of his own style have an obscuring effect, and he often only hints allusively at the true state of current affairs. This technique is not limited to his political poems, but pervades all his work, and should not be seen as an attempt to mislead or deceive his audience: rather it is fuelled by the stylistic preferences of the age and a desire to represent in traditional terms a world which is changing to such an extent that a new vocabulary is required.[6]

Although Sidonius to a certain degree follows the precepts outlined by authors such as Menander Rhetor, he is by no means hidebound in his approach. His imperial panegyrics are presented in the form of a series of static tableaux interspersed with monologue and he makes great use of set-piece descriptions (*ecphraseis*), which are depicted not with a broad sweep, but as a succession of minute details. The result is representations which are not in themselves novel, but which stimulate a fresh imaginative response in the audience.

An increased degree of ornamentation and colour is the most immediately notable difference between the visual arts of the classical period and those of late antiquity, and this change of taste is also reflected in later literature. Although Sidonius' verse is often compared to that of Claudian, his style is distinct and his aim is far removed from that of his predecessor. Claudian's panegyrics have been defined as propaganda,[7] and Sidonius' panegyrics certainly have a definite political purpose, but in comparing the material of the two poets, an important fact should always be borne in mind: Claudian wrote his imperial panegyrics for an apparently established dynasty, Theodosius I and his successor in the West, but Sidonius was writing half a century later and lived in a period of political chaos. In the twelve years between the death of Valentinian III and the election of Anthemius, the western empire had

[6] For a perceptive examination of examples of Sidonius' technique of presenting information in the *Letters* see J. Percival, 'Desperately Seeking Sidonius', *Latomus* 56 (1997) 279–92. I am grateful for a preview of this article.

[7] Cameron 1970, 46–62; his definition has been defended and expanded by J. Long, *Claudian's In Eutropium or How, When and Why to Slander a Eunuch* (North Carolina, 1996) 202–12.

experienced the death of four emperors and an interregnum of about eighteen months during which the barbarian commander-in-chief Ricimer (who had engineered the death of certainly two, possibly three of these emperors) held power. Genre and coincidence of events do create points of contact between the two poets, but even when dealing with the same iconic material, such as the personification of Roma as a warrior goddess, circumstances and stylistic preferences produce two very different results. In his depiction of what must have been a well-known and easily recognizable icon, Roma personified, Sidonius devotes five lines of a fifteen-line passage to Roma's footwear (*Pan. Anthem.* 400–5), using vocabulary and imagery so elaborate that the shoes which regularly appear on other representations of the divinity are very hard to recognize. The whole passage is one of great technical virtuosity and displays all the trappings of late antique verse.[8] Sidonius' style is dense and heavily ornamented; he relies heavily on word-play and complex figures of speech, and he constantly seeks novel sources of focus in order to surprise his audience.

Claudian briefly depicts Roma as a combination of feminine virtues and belligerent power at a moment of military success (*Pan. Olyb. et Prob.* 83–9), but Sidonius had a more difficult task to perform. His warrior-goddess had to undergo the humiliation of travelling to the East to seek a new emperor, and Sidonius needed to represent her in such a way that she retained her traditional integrity in an untraditional situation (*Pan. Anthem.* 391–4). He chose to do this by elaborating on her appearance at much greater length than Claudian felt necessary, and produced an *ecphrasis* in which the predominance of stylistic virtuosity removes attention from the reality of the situation. Similarities in the verse of Claudian and that of Sidonius are identifiable, but an examination of the many differences, made with an awareness of the dangers of judgmental conclusions on quality of product, is more likely to prove useful for the study of literary developments.

As a response to a set of circumstances pertaining to one particular ceremonial occasion, verse panegyric is a complex medium which resists narrow definitions. Expectations of the character and qualities of the honorand might remain the same, but the circum-

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[8] For the developments in imagery in late antiquity see Onians 1980; for ornamentation in the use of language see Roberts 1989.

stances which compel events might be radically different. Panegyric is not simply laudatory verse although one of its roles is, indeed, to present the honorand in a favourable light. The emperor, in particular, together with his accompanying *felicitas* ('good fortune'), represents the luck of the empire; this good fortune is not subject to chance, but is the evidence of personal excellence and a mark of the emperor's good relationship with the gods (or God). This relationship has a direct significance for the welfare of the empire and the emperor embodies the hopes of future stability and prosperity. His *virtus* ('worth', the sum of all his excellences) is demonstrated by his past actions and his success in war and peace (cf. Menander Rhetor 2.372–6), and so the poet must show these actions to be worthy of an emperor, and the man who performs them to be worthy of the throne. However, he must also bear in mind the expectations of the audience, and these must be transmitted to the honorand.

Sidonius' consular panegyrics

The emperor regularly took up the consulship for the year following his imperial accession, and Sidonius' two imperial consular panegyrics in effect introduce the emperor and the senate to one another within the context of a ritual which ratifies the emperor's power. By the fifth century, the consulship had long since ceased to possess any executive powers, but the authority of the title lingered on, and Avitus and Anthemius both chose to establish themselves by means of this tradition. Sidonius' middle panegyric, that to Majorian (*Carm.* 4–5, AD 458), is not part of a consular accession, but of an *adventus*, a ceremony celebrating the occasion of an imperial arrival. It shares similarities of structure with the consular panegyrics but its purpose is different and it will not be considered in the following discussion.[9]

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[9] The structure of the panegyric to Majorian is more complex than that to Avitus, but less so than that to Anthemius (both discussed below). The dramatic context of the first half (*Pan. Maj.* 13–369) is a council of the provinces, presided over by Roma, at which personified Africa seeks aid against Geiseric; a biography of Majorian is included in this material (107–327). The second half (370–603) is an appeal for the lightening of the heavy taxes imposed on Lyons for insurrection against Majorian, and for the greater inclusion of Gallo-Romans in the imperial administration. See further Harries 1994, 89f.;

Avitus came to power following the violent death of the previous emperor, Petronius Maximus, and the sack of Rome by Geiseric in 455; his election was largely due to the support he commanded amongst the Visigoths, and the hope of the military aid which their troops would provide. Before a Roman audience Sidonius had to justify the claim to the throne of a man who did not have a string of magistracies to his name, who seems to have had no connections with the imperial court, and who had neither support in Italy nor the endorsement of the Roman Senate. The panegyric (*Pan. Avit.*) represents the election of Avitus as ratified by Jupiter himself. The framework of this poem is a council of the gods summoned by Jupiter, at which a personification of Roma appears to beg for aid. She has the dust of mourning in her hair and although she carries weapons, they serve only as an impediment to her progress; as a suppliant, she casts herself at Jupiter's knees (45–50). This unexpected portrayal of Roma is striking but not completely without precedent. Claudian depicted Roma as a starving suppliant of Jupiter (*In Gild.* 17–23) when, due to a transfer of allegiance from the western to the eastern empire by an African prince, control of the grain supply had been lost.[10] The portrayal is not located within the context of a ceremony, Rome is not the seat of power because the imperial court was at that time domiciled in Milan, and the power of the dynastic incumbent is not under threat. Sidonius' Roma recalls for his audience a recent and far more disastrous occurrence: the sack of Rome by Geiseric only months before this panegyric was delivered. Unlike Claudian's Roma, she does not serve as the means to celebrate the success of a current emperor, achieved through the agency of his commander-in-chief, but to represent the straits into which the western empire has fallen. Such a crisis paves the way for the acceptance of a Gallic emperor and his barbarian supporters. The greater part of the poem (*Pan. Avit.* 123–598) comprises Jupiter's answer, in which he outlines the events and achievements in Avitus' life which will make him a suitable emperor, and narrates the circumstances of Avitus' election, which he tacitly endorses. This election was by no means orthodox: at the time of the sack of Rome and death of Petronius Maximus, Avitus, in his capacity as Master of Foot and

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Bury 1923, I 330f.

[10] This was a political move engineered by Eutropius in Constantinople to undermine the power of Stilicho in the West: see further Cameron 1970, ch. 5.

Horse, was renegotiating a treaty with the Visigoths under Theoderic II, whom Sidonius represents as making the suggestion that Avitus should stand as emperor (508–9). His nomination was ratified by a hastily assembled gathering of Gallic nobles (who were probably not the official representative council of Gaul) and reinforced by his Visigothic troops. Sidonius' Jupiter presents Avitus to Roma as a mature military leader who will rejuvenate the city (585–98).[11]

If the situation of Avitus' accession to the throne was unusual, that of Anthemius was unique. Born in Constantinople, he was the grandson of the Anthemius who had been regent during the minority of Theodosius II (AD 408–14). He married the daughter of the emperor Marcian, and pursued a military and administrative career under that emperor and his successor, Leo. His nomination by Leo as western emperor was part of the terms negotiated by Ricimer, the western commander-in-chief, and the Roman Senate with the administration in Constantinople as a response to the deteriorating situation in the West. The western empire required the assistance of the eastern empire against Vandal attack, and Leo had sent Anthemius with a large naval force for a combined assault on Geiseric's African stronghold. This attack was ultimately disastrously unsuccessful, but at the time of the delivery of Sidonius' panegyric, the Romans must at least have allowed themselves a moment of optimism that the *status quo* of the traditional Roman empire might be restored. However, the price of that restoration must have been a bitter pill to swallow, and Sidonius' panegyric (*Pan. Anthem.*) is a sophisticated response to his most difficult task. He must present to a Roman audience an emperor who came from the East and who had been nominated by the eastern emperor. His audience would probably have included the commander-in-chief, Ricimer, who had effectively ruled the western empire through a succession of emperors and then, for about eighteen months, alone. His power would surely be eroded by the new emperor whom Sidonius intimates will wish to take control of military matters himself (316; 382–6). Possibly present too was Pope Hilary (in office AD 461–8), who publicly registered his disapproval of the emperor early in his reign, due to the fact that, although Anthemius was undoubtedly a Christian, he appears

[11] For the circumstances of Avitus' election see further Harries 1994, 75–9.

to have enjoyed the company of pagan philosophers, and Count Marcellinus, the campaign commander who had accompanied him to Rome, was also pagan.[12] In the audience would have been leading Romans who might have welcomed the rule of Anthemius as a better alternative to the power of the barbarian Ricimer, but who would still have harboured a certain amount of resentment towards an incoming emperor who highlighted their own inability to handle the affairs of the western empire. Sidonius' task was therefore twofold: he had to represent as a suitable emperor the man on whom the success of his political mission depended, and also to satisfy his larger audience that he had presented their expectations and anxieties to the emperor. Sidonius was well aware of the realities, novelty and delicacy of the situation but he depicted with optimism and as the dawn of a new age what was, in effect, one of the lowest ebbs of Rome's history; within eight years the western empire would pass out of Roman rule.

Structurally the panegyric to Anthemius is far more complex than that dedicated to Avitus; the first half (*Pan. Anthem.* 1–306) follows the precepts set out by Menander Rhetor with some modifications to suit the circumstances. Sidonius introduces the honorand to the Senate (13–17), praises Constantinople as being both the seat of eastern power and Anthemius' birthplace (30–67), and narrates a particularly praiseworthy event in the life of the new emperor's father (67–93). He then moves on to the life of Anthemius and includes material on his birth, infancy, youth, education, and military career (99–306). An invocation to Apollo and the Muses (307–16) serves as the introduction to the second half of the poem and the ratification of Anthemius' accession is given the seal of divine approval. This is expressed in mythological terms, which by this period are a mark of cultural continuity and which provide a context within which Sidonius can present a situation which is far from traditional.

Sidonius then depicts the events leading to the selection of Anthemius on a mythological plane, with personifications of Roma and Aurora (the East, Dawn) representing Rome and Constantinople

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[12] On Anthemius' pagan associates, see further L. Vassili, 'La cultura di Antemio', *Athenaeum* n.s. 16 (1938) 38–45; J.M. O'Flynn, 'A Greek on the Roman Throne: The fate of Anthemius', *Historia* 40 (1991) 1–23. The pope may not have attended the ceremony: he died at the end of February 468, and ill-health (or disapproval) may have kept him away.

(317–523). The selection of Anthemius, far from being in the control of the eastern emperor, is here portrayed as being the personal choice of Roma. Through a hierarchy of messengers which reflects the formality of the terrestrial court, Roma receives an appeal for aid from Oenotria, generally thought to represent the whole of Italy, but perhaps more specifically the regions of southern Italy which were regularly attacked in hit-and-run raids by Geiseric's Vandals (341–86). Roma travels to the land of Aurora, the Dawn, not to beg for help from the East, but to point out that she is owed Anthemius. Swift settlement will restore a harmonious relationship between the two parts of the empire (440–515). This theme of unity is emphasized in both halves of the panegyric (29; 65–7, which foreshadows on the terrestrial level the statement of account Roma renders Aurora on the mythological plane).[13] At all points the authority of Roma is maintained: she initiates the action, her mission is not that of a suppliant but to receive what she is owed. By using Aurora to represent the East, Sidonius is able to depict Roma negotiating with a divinity who is less specific than a city personification, although his Aurora is a combination of elements of the goddess of the Dawn and of iconic representations of Constantinople personified.[14] Aurora's palace and the divinity herself provide the opportunity for an *ecphrasis* (407–35), but the only function of the divinity is to grant what Roma demands. Sidonius has offended neither his Roman audience by the appearance of too great a dependency on Constantinople, nor the eastern honorand by belittling his birthplace. The poem returns to

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[13] Coin issues from the period suggest that this unity was of most importance to the western empire: coins minted under Anthemius in the West depict two emperors, emphasizing ratification and harmony of purpose. The eastern emperor felt no such need to stress this point and eastern issues depict only Leo. See further W.E. Kaegi, Jnr, *Byzantium and the Decline of Rome* (Princeton, 1968) 43.

[14] Rome was regularly represented as a personified warrior divinity, clad in a short tunic which left one breast bare, helmeted and carrying a spear or sceptre. The personification of Constantinople was not warlike but was a mature, female figure, wearing a long tunic, a turreted head-dress and veil and often represented carrying a cornucopia or a thyrsus sceptre. Roma and Constantinople appear together in these forms on the Vienna diptych (see n.19). Sidonius first describes Aurora in terms appropriate to the divinity representing dawn: she is young, with flashing eyes and rosy complexion (*Pan. Anthem.* 424–31). As the moment for her confrontation with Roma approaches, she acquires a more dignified aspect: she sits on a throne upon a dais and is flanked by companions, although she carries a lamp rather than a sceptre (432–5).

a terrestrial level with the poet's personal suggestion for a relationship between the Roman people and the new emperor (524–36).

Themes and techniques: foedera, Romanitas, the past

Foedera

In both panegyrics Sidonius acknowledges that times have changed and that the present and future empire will no longer hold power and maintain stability, as it has in the past, by means of Roman conquest and military might: the nature of power must be redefined. Although the examples which Sidonius uses to illustrate heroic behaviour in the ideal ruler deal with conquest, it must now in reality often be replaced with compromise. The importance which Sidonius placed on treaties (*foedera*) with barbarian peoples for protecting Roman rule in Gaul has been noted,[15] and treaties also play a significant role in the wider context of the panegyrics to Avitus and Anthemius. They are mentioned in conjunction with Avitus' success in battle when his actions in peace and war are praised (*Pan. Avit.* 214), and Avitus' ability to negotiate these treaties is clearly considered advantageous for a future emperor. Avitus has controlled the aspirations of Theoderic, not by conquering him in battle, but by renewing a treaty with him:

> postquam undique nullum
> praesidium ducibusque tuis nil, Roma, relictum est,
> foedus, Auite, nouas; saeuum tua pagina regem
> lecta domat. (*Pan. Avit.* 306–9)

> When there was no defence anywhere and no resource was left to your leaders, Roma, you, Avitus, renewed the treaty; your letter, when read, subdued the fierce king.

Although these treaties have become the tool of a government which can no longer rely on military power to conquer and subdue those tribes which present a threat to the empire, Sidonius interprets situations which smack of compromise in terms of past, more aggressive achievements. The relationship of Avitus and Theoderic II is compared to that established by treaty between

[15] Harries 1992, 301–3.

Romulus and Tatius (*Pan. Avit.* 437–40), a comparison which disguises the true nature of their alliance. Livy might appear to represent the outcome of the war with the Sabines as a balanced fusion of two tribes (1.13.8 *inde non modo commune sed concors etiam regnum duobus regibus,* 'From then on the two kings had a kingdom that was not only common but also harmonious'), but examination of the details of his account reveals that this is not so. Although the Romans take the name of Quirites as a concession to the Sabines, the seat of power is to be Rome (ibid.), the Sabines are subsumed into the Roman people, and Tatius soon disappears from the scene and is not replaced (14.1–3). Livy has allotted to Tatius and his people a subordinate role, and Sidonius used this reminiscence of Rome's early history to colour similarly his representation of Avitus and Theoderic, when, in reality, the role of the latter was crucial.[16] The treaties in the panegyric to Avitus will establish a working relationship with barbarian tribes under the control of a strong emperor. At no point does Sidonius suggest that the barbarians will play more than a subordinate role, although the reality of the situation was that Avitus would not have come to power without strong Visigothic support. At the same time he reminds his audience of Avitus' controlling role and, although he represents Theoderic II as a friend to Rome, he makes it clear that this friendship is based on personal allegiance and is conditional: *Romae sum te duce amicus, | principe te miles,* 'with you as leader, I am a friend of Rome, with you as emperor, I am her soldier' (511f.). Rome needed the support of the Visigothic troops at this point in her history and Sidonius, by placing these remarks in the mouth of Theoderic II, obliquely warns his audience that, if they want this military aid, they may have little choice in accepting Avitus as emperor.[17] At the same time he seeks to set at rest anxieties they

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[16] M. Reydellet views this comparison as most significant in supporting his theory that Sidonius considered the barbarian king a paradigm of the ideal ruler against which to measure Roman emperors (*La Royauté dans la littérature latine de Sidoine Apollinaire à Isidore de Seville* (Rome, 1981) 77). He suggests that Sidonius envisages a similar fusion of two peoples which would lead to the second foundation of Rome and cites Livy in support. There is, however, no evidence in Livy of the equal partnership and executive role for the non-Roman king which Reydellet's interpretation of Sidonius' hopes for the future would require.

[17] Sivan (1989, 90) considers this depiction to be that of a 'meek monarch', but the words which the poet here puts into Theoderic's mouth are a thinly veiled threat: although the barbarian ruler may have been 'Romanized' to

may have about the control of these barbarian forces. His political manifesto for Avitus is outlined in mythological terms in the verse preface to the panegyric; Orpheus praises the goddess Athena for the part she has played in the battle between the gods and giants, thus defining the theme as that of a struggle between civilized and uncivilized forces. Although Athena is introduced by the name Pallas (*Pan. Avit.* praef. 1), at the point in the poem where her appearance is a decisive factor, she is later referred to as *Sapientia* (19), and the elemental, uncivilized force of the giants is overcome and controlled by the forces of order, intellect and culture, just as the barbarians will be controlled by the Roman Avitus.

Treaties with barbarians also play a part in the panegyric to Anthemius: his father negotiates a new treaty with the Persians (*Pan. Anthem.* 82), Anthemius is compared to Marius, the avenger of a treaty broken by Jugurtha (230), Ricimer is at a disadvantage because he can make no treaty with Geiseric (356). In this later panegyric, however, aid is sought from a different source; Sidonius also expresses the relationship between the East and West in terms of political alliance, and Anthemius arrives in Italy with a treaty made between the two halves of the empire (315). This could be interpreted as a sop to his western audience, a disguising of the reality that the western empire is now totally dependent on the East, but it has been noted that in the period of the later empire the relationship of the Augusti was not that of a partnership directing an undivided empire, but should be viewed more as the traditional alliance of two sovereigns with independent kingdoms.[18] In the second half of the panegyric (317–521), the appointment of Anthemius, which has been determined by the emperor of the East, is depicted as being the choice of the personified Roma, who sets out a case for her right to him in terms of the repayment of a debt. She offers to cancel out the East's debt to the West for the territory the East has gained through western Roman conquest, if Aurora grants her Anthemius as an emperor (478f.). This arrangement is to be reflected on a terrestrial level by a treaty between the eastern and western emperors, and also by a more personal alliance (483 *priuatum . . . foedus*). The word *foedus*, 'treaty', is also applied to the marriage bond: the renegotiated treaty between East and West will

make him acceptable to the Roman audience, it is clearly to be understood that control of him and his forces is dependent personally on Avitus.

[18] Jones 325.

receive concrete ratification, not only by the West's acceptance of Anthemius as emperor, but also by the marriage of his daughter to the commander-in-chief, Ricimer. This marriage will reflect the *concordia* ('harmony') which, the poet declares in his own voice, in these circumstances unites the empire (522). At this period the alliance of East and West may well have been viewed in terms of marriage, at least in the West. A personification of Constantinople, apparently dressed as a bride, appears on a well-known diptych, dated to 469, whose provenance has been identified as western.[19] One of the cardinal characteristics of a good Roman marriage was *concordia*, which has been defined as 'a state of tranquil and stable unanimity',[20] and this definition would apply well to the state of political stability which was Sidonius' ideal. This interpretation of the relationship between the two halves of the empire serves to disguise the reality of the West's reliance on eastern aid: as the treaty between Romulus and Tatius implied an unequal relationship, so also does this. Harmony in marriage no more suggests an equality of partnership than did the harmony of government between the Roman and Sabine kings, and the facade of Rome's superiority is maintained.

Romanitas

It has been remarked that the preoccupations of the present are profoundly determinative of the perceptions of the past,[21] and there is evidence of this in both of the panegyrics under discussion. Certainly the threat of barbarian invasion and Rome's clearly demonstrated inability to meet this threat were a source of great anxiety to those in the western empire, and created suspicion and fear of whatever did not conform to the cultural norm. Sidonius' audience must be convinced of the *Romanitas*, 'Roman-ness', of both Avitus' barbarian supporter, Theoderic II, and of the Greek emperor, Anthemius. Sidonius is aware of this sense of insecurity and prejudice; when endorsing the position of an emperor who has come to power through Gallo-Roman and Visigothic support, without the commendation of the Roman Senate, he represents the

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[19] For the Vienna diptych see R. Delbrueck, *Die Consulardiptychen* (Berlin, 1929) II pl.38.

[20] K.R. Bradley, *Discovering the Roman Family* (Oxford, 1991) 7.

[21] G. Clarke (ed.), *Reading the Past in Late Antiquity* (Australian National University Press, 1990) xi.

Visigothic king, Theoderic II, as a man influenced by traditional Roman culture, and therefore a safe and suitable ally against more dangerous barbarian enemies, albeit only as long as Avitus is emperor. He depicts Theoderic himself reminding Avitus (and, of course, the audience) of the key role Avitus played in Romanizing Theoderic's tribe:

> mihi Romula dudum
> per te iura placent, paruumque ediscere iussit
> ad tua uerba pater docili quo prisca Maronis
> carmine molliret Scythicos mihi pagina mores. (*Pan. Avit.* 495–8)

> Through your agency the laws of Rome have for a long time been pleasing to me, and my father ordered me as a child to learn by heart, exactly as you said, so that the poetry of Virgil's ancient page might soften the Scythian habits of me, its willing pupil.

This technique is also evident as Sidonius strives to reassure his audience and confirm Anthemius' position by his emphasis on the fact that, in spite of his eastern birth and upbringing, the emperor is Roman. In discussing Anthemius' education, although Sidonius pays a lengthy tribute to the emperor's understanding of Greek philosophy (*Pan. Anthem.* 156–81), he suggests that a far wider range of Latin authors have played a formative part in the emperor's intellectual development (182–92). Sidonius' final direct address to the honorand makes use of a title, *Pater patriae*, 'father of his country', a title awarded to the first emperor, Augustus, which links Anthemius firmly to a western tradition (547). Power must be represented as under the control of *Romanitas*, even if reality is a more unpleasant truth, the admission of which would represent the humiliation of the Roman ideal.

The past

In stable periods of history the past is the future, and at times of political upheaval reminiscences of past security and glory are not always so much empty rhetoric as a prophylactic formula, which if repeated will seem to provide a guarantee for the future; at the very least they offer the security of cultural continuity in a rapidly changing world. Sidonius calls on the past throughout the two panegyrics to provide appropriate Roman exemplars for the honorands' actions. Although Avitus may have a good relationship with the Visigoths, he never ceases to be a good Roman of the old school: when he visited a relative who was a hostage with Theoderic I, he

impressed the barbarian king so much that *(te) nimis uult esse suum*, 'he had a great wish for you to be one of his own men' (*Pan. Avit.* 224). Sidonius applauds Avitus' reaction to the king's overtures, *sed spernis amicum | plus quam Romanum gerere*, 'but you spurned acting the friend rather than the Roman' (224f.), and compares Avitus' behaviour to that of Fabricius, a poor man whose friendship cannot be bought by the foreign invader, Pyrrhus (226–9).

Heroic moments from ancient Roman history are recalled when the enfeebled Roma appeals to Jupiter for a new leader to rescue her from her current plight: she proclaims her need for leaders such as she has had in the past, Mucius, Horatius, Fabius Maximus, Fabricius, the Decii—all men famed for their victories over tribes which threatened Rome's safety—and she yearns for a return to the days of her early power (59–71). She claims that she has been absorbed into the character of the emperor, and successive bad emperors have diminished her power (102–4); by this means, Sidonius absolves Roma from personal responsibility for Rome's plight and instead assigns it to the actions of individual emperors. He selects Trajan as the exemplar of a good emperor: Trajan is doubly appropriate as his success over barbarian tribes can be cited (114), and his Spanish origin means that he can be presented as a comparison for the Gallic Avitus, since Spain now came within the boundaries of the prefecture of Gaul. The non-dynastic nature of Trajan's accession makes him a highly appropriate exemplar for Avitus, who can claim no imperial connections, and he is noteworthy as one of very few non-Republican examples used.[22] Anthemius is also compared to a past leader, Marius, who has had success against foreign invaders (*Pan. Anthem.* 226–31). Since Geiseric is implicitly regarded as the new Hannibal in both panegyrics (cf. *Pan. Avit.* 588 *hic tibi restituet Libyen per uincula quarta*, 'this man will restore to you Libya in a fourth set of chains', a reference to the three previous Punic wars), and Anthemius' African campaign is imminent, the emphasis is on an African enemy. Marius defeated the Cimbri after he had conquered Jugurtha, a situation which will be reversed by Anthemius, whose past success against the Ostrogoths has just been celebrated (*Pan.*

[22] The source of Sidonius' admiration for Trajan may well be Pliny's panegyric. At *Ep.* 4.22.2, Sidonius declares himself to be Pliny's pupil, and the panegyric to Trajan is specifically mentioned at *Ep.* 8.10.3.

Anthem. 223–6), and whose future success over the African Vandal is joyfully anticipated (548).

Although Sidonius, in using examples from the past as comparisons with present or future actions, appears to wish to recreate the past, he is also aware that too much has changed to make this possible or, perhaps, even desirable. The panegyric to Anthemius demonstrates that he is well aware of the unique situation of the emperor he is called to celebrate, and the fact that no comparison from the past is available for a western Roman emperor who was a Greek appointed by the East. Nowhere in the panegyric is it openly acknowledged that Anthemius' position is novel, but Sidonius defines the nature of this emperor's power by means of a theme, the antithesis *uetus / nouus* ('old', 'with precedent'/ 'new', 'novel'), which underpins the whole work. This theme is first signalled in the verse preface, the opening subject of which is Jupiter, newly entered into his reign: *susciperetque nouus regna uetusta deus,* 'and the new god was taking up an old kingship' (*Pan. Anthem.* praef. 2); the preface also closes with the declaration that the emperor makes *noua templa,* 'new temples' in the hearts of his western subjects (30). This theme of the relationship of the old with the new continues as a subtext at key points throughout the poem: the fact that Anthemius has previously held the consulship allows Sidonius to declare him *consul uetus,* 'an old consul' for an *annum . . . nouum,* 'a new year' (*Pan. Anthem.* 3), thus giving the new ruler a past firmly linked with Roman traditions. The emperor is welcomed with the words *nil natura nouat,* 'nature makes no innovation' (12), a reassurance to Janus (and the audience) that nothing has changed, that the new emperor, like the sun to which he is compared, might come from the East, but he is part of the natural order of the cosmos. In a description of the extension of Constantinople onto land reclaimed from the sea, the emperor's birthplace has established an antithetical relationship with its environment, which challenges the natural order, *ueteres tellus noua contrahit undas,* 'a new land diminishes old waters' (58).[23] Omens signal the emperor's birth *rerum nouitate,* 'with unexpected phenomena' (114), but these have well-established precedents in the past, examples of omens accompanying the births of Iulus, Romulus, Julius Caesar,

[23] For the expansion of Constantinople and the rebuilding of its walls by Anthemius, grandfather of the honorand, see Bury 1923, I 69f.

Alexander and Augustus (115–26). However, the omen which definitively predicts Anthemius' imperial future, a severed vine branch which spontaneously produces alien shoots (131), has no precedent. The old wood has been revitalized by the appearance on it of a new species, an appropriate omen for the emperor who is to revitalize the western empire.

This antithesis *uetus/nouus* is also reinforced on three occasions in the form of a direct dialogue between the poet and the past. On two of these *Vetustas*, 'the Past', is challenged by Sidonius to provide an exemplar comparable to Anthemius, and, as might be expected, the examples provided are no match and the Past is unsuccessful (288–90; 299–306). The third encounter between the poet and the Past is somewhat different (524–36). Here Sidonius does not seek exemplars from the past as a comparison for Anthemius, but challenges the Past in order to question its attitude to its heroes. He reviews the treatment given to Camillus, Cincinnatus and Livius Salinator, who have saved the Roman State from barbarian and Punic attack, and comes to the conclusion that they have not necessarily been appreciated beforehand. He accuses the Past of jealousy towards its heroes (524) and summarizes its attitude with the command *pelle prius, quos uicta petas*, 'banish in advance those whom you will seek when you have been conquered' (530). Sidonius stresses that the present knows how to treat its saviours better; Anthemius will not be humiliated as have past heroes, but will be appreciated for his potential by an enlightened State: *longe altera nostri | gratia iudicii est: scit se non laesus amari*, 'the favour bestowed on our choice is far different; he knows that he is loved without having been injured' (535f.). Sidonius does not seek here to recreate an ideal past but to demonstrate that the present is not only a fusion with, but also a development and improvement on the past, a time when there will be a spirit of unity and co-operation for which Anthemius will be the catalyst. As the panegyric draws to a close with an exhortation to Anthemius, who is about to make new conquests and to free old captives (547f., the captives referred to are slaves whose manumission formed part of the consular accession ceremony), the motif of *uetus/nouus* is transferred to the future, in which Sidonius hopes that anxieties about foreign invasion will be removed, and political stability achieved by the defeat of Geiseric.

Conclusion

Sidonius' overriding desire was for political stability, and in his imperial panegyrics, which provided him with a public forum in which to deliver his political manifesto, he suggests a means of achieving this which is pertinent to the moment of delivery. He outlines the political relationships which he thinks will best bring about this stability, and he gives these credibility by constant reference to the past as a yardstick. He thus provides cultural continuity for concepts of power which are, in fact, not traditional. Although in his imperial panegyrics Sidonius makes frequent reference to the past, he is well aware of the political situation of the present and seeks to define a situation which is recognizably Roman, but which will also result in stability. He is not always discussing the reality of the present, but is suggesting relationships which will shape the future, and, as the political situation of the second half of the fifth century was complex, turbulent and constantly changing, it should not be surprising if these answers vary from poem to poem. In the panegyric addressed to Avitus, he would seem to suggest that the acceptance of support from one group of barbarians, the Visigoths, will enable Rome to confront the attacks of the barbarian Geiseric. By the time he delivered the panegyric to Anthemius, it is with support from the eastern empire that Rome will overcome the Vandal threat. It has been pointed out that inconsistencies of attitude in Sidonius' letters reflect changing situations and different perspectives rather than a flawed character,[24] and such a caveat is doubly necessary in consideration of the panegyrics, which have to express not only some representation of the present, but also hopes for the future, couched in the imagery of the past. Each panegyric is the result of a particular situation and the poet's response to this; events could quickly overtake his expectations and render much of his material outdated within a short space of time. Sidonius would never, surely, have foreseen such a short reign for his father-in-law, Avitus (AD 455–6), nor have wished the outcome of Anthemius' rule to be civil war between the emperor and his commander-in-chief, Ricimer. Panegyric must be considered first and foremost in the context of its moment of delivery, a delivery enhanced in Sidonius' case by the celebratory

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[24] Harries 1992, 299f.

ritual of which it was an integral part; it is an elaborate, richly ornamented encomiastic response which plays a part in an elaborate ceremony whose formalization and choreography gave it much in common with a theatrical production.[25]

In the past Sidonius has received criticism from historians, for whom he is an important but very difficult source, because he does not give clear evidence, and from literary critics, who consider that his highly-wrought style obscures the dearth of original thought. More recently his work has been viewed with greater sympathy, but he is an author who will always present scholars with a difficult task. Much of his work, both the poems and the letters, has a political purpose which links it closely with its historical context, and is thus meaningless without a sound understanding of the contemporary events it describes or discusses. At the same time it draws on non-political literary traditions in order to create an effect, and too superficial an examination of his words can lead to faulty conclusions. Sidonius' material does not recognize the academic distinctions between the disciplines of the study of history and of literary criticism; he will perhaps yield more to scholars from both these fields working in close co-operation than he will to the specialist carrying out an isolated study.

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[25] For the theatrical qualities of court ceremonial in late antiquity see MacCormack 9f.

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CHRISTIAN OVERTONES

CHAPTER EIGHT

SAVAGE HUMOUR: CHRISTIAN ANTI-PANEGYRIC IN HILARY OF POITIERS' *AGAINST CONSTANTIUS*

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Introduction

When, in the early fifth century, Latin Christians looked back on the first hundred years of the Christian Roman empire, they paused to applaud Hilary, bishop of Poitiers between about 353 and 368, as an outstanding champion of orthodoxy. For example, Rufinus' *Ecclesiastical History* described how Hilary's campaigns on behalf of orthodoxy were so efficient 'that all shadows of heresy fled even from concealed and abstruse corners'; moreover, Hilary had achieved this remarkable result through gentle persuasion (*HE* 10.32). Compared to his doctrinaire contemporary, Lucifer, bishop of Cagliari in Sardinia, Hilary was indeed a model of tolerance: whereas Lucifer could never countenance any Christology other than that formulated in 325 at Nicaea—that Father and Son were *homoousios*, 'of the same substance'—Hilary could accommodate as orthodox those who proclaimed that Father and Son were *homoiousios*, 'of similar substance'.[1] Yet this does not mean that Hilary was weak-willed: in this essay I will demonstrate how he could be confrontational and uncompromising by examining the polemical content of his *Book against the Emperor Constantius* (*Liber in Constantium imperatorem*, hereafter referred to as the *Against Constantius*).[2]

I will argue that this text shows the impact of imperial rhetoric and propaganda on Christian modes of expression. After Constantine's conversion, and particularly in the reign of his son

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[1] The best guides to the doctrinal controversies of the fourth century are Hanson 1988 and Barnes 1993.

[2] Throughout I will use the edition of Rocher 1987. My citations are in the form of section number followed by line number(s).

Constantius II (337–61), there was considerable interpenetration between the affairs of Church and State, requiring bishops like Hilary to act as politicians on an imperial stage. As a consequence, ecclesiastical leaders had to learn the skills of secular politicians, and in no small measure the success of bishops such as Athanasius of Alexandria depended as much on their political guile as their theological abilities.[3] The *Against Constantius* reflects this process in the way it adopts, manipulates and ultimately distorts several conventions of encomiastic speeches to the emperor. In so doing it presents a devastating portrait of Constantius II's ecclesiastical policies, depicting the emperor quite literally as a worse scourge for the Church than his pagan predecessors who had persecuted Christianity. This is not to say that the work adheres throughout to the literary conventions of secular encomium or invective. Instead, it incorporates its distortion of panegyric into a work with a broader theological purpose. I speak in terms of 'anti-panegyric' rather than 'invective', in order to emphasize that Hilary's diatribe on Constantius represents a conscious inversion of the techniques of imperial panegyric; I suggest, moreover, that Hilary intended it in some sense to amuse his audience. My suspicions are based on the extent to which the *Against Constantius* differs from Hilary's two other polemics directed against individuals, the *Against Ursacius and Valens* (*Adversus Ursacium et Valentem*) and the *Against Auxentius* (*Contra Auxentium*). I will begin (§ I) by analysing the structure of the *Against Constantius*, demonstrating that it is unique in Hilary's *œuvre*. Then (§§ II–III) I will set it in the context of Hilary's dealings with Constantius and examine (§§ IV–V) how the anti-panegyrical elements of the work demonstrate the author's savage humour. It will emerge from this analysis that the propaganda of power was not reserved for the performance of imperial panegyrics, but found expression in many areas of late Roman social discourse.

I *The nature of the Against Constantius*

The *Against Constantius* is a complex work, made up of several distinct elements. Hilary opens with a dramatic, apocalyptic statement of his theme, that the time has come to overturn the regime

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[3] Bowersock 1986.

of Antichrist (*In Const.* 1). Hilary's audience is identified in the next section (2) as those western bishops who subscribed to the doctrinal formula laid down at the Council of Nicaea in 325. This address continues in the same vein, elaborating its apocalyptic tone and ultimately identifying the main target of Hilary's fulminations, the Emperor Constantius II who is condemned as Antichrist himself (5.1–3; 6.7).

At this point, the work changes direction. Hilary now addresses himself directly to Constantius rather than his fellow bishops. The character of this apostrophe to the emperor is summed up in the opening lines:

> I proclaim to you, Constantius, precisely what I would have said to Nero, and what Decius and Galerius have heard from me: you wage war against God, you rage against the Church, you persecute the saints, you hate the preachers of Christ, you extinguish religion, you are a tyrant not just in human affairs, but in divine ones too (7.1–5).

The next sections (7–11) deal with Constantius as persecutor, waging war not just on the Church but on God Himself. Hilary recounts the horrors of Constantius' campaigns against the Church, telling of terrible judgements dispensed at Alexandria, Rome, Trier, Milan and Toulouse. The concluding sentence reiterates the apocalyptic tone which has pervaded the *Against Constantius* thus far: 'Constantius, if I lie about these things, you are a sheep;[4] but if indeed you act in this way, you are Antichrist!' (11.35–7).

Hilary now resumes his address to the bishops, giving details of the theological character of Constantius' misdemeanours, by describing the doctrinal formula of *homoios* (which asserted the 'likeness' of God and Christ) proclaimed at the Council of Seleucia in 359 and given imperial backing a few months later, in January 360, at Constantinople (12–15).[5] This paves the way for the final part of the work, in which Hilary refutes Constantius' homoian creed (16–27). For this, Hilary reverts to a direct address to the emperor himself. The early sections are a detailed, theological argument against homoianism on the basis of Scripture (16–22). Thereafter, however, Hilary resumes his personal onslaught against

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[4] The image is derived from Matthew 7.15 'Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.' For elucidation see Rocher 1987, 240.

[5] For definitions of these doctrinal formulae see below §§ II–III.

Constantius (23–6). The work closes with a peroration (27), in which Hilary reiterates the arguments of the *Against Constantius* as a whole. Constantius' actions are directed against both human and divine law (27.18; cf. 7.5), so that Constantius goes beyond the bounds of his imperial power (27.19–20), and as such must be considered a tyrant (cf. 7.5). The final lines reinforce this by reminding Constantius that he is 'the foe (*hostis*) of divine religion, the enemy (*inimicus*) of the memory of the saints, and an insurgent (*rebellis*) against [his] father's piety' (27.25–7).

The *Against Constantius* differs radically from Hilary's two other major invectives. The earliest of these is the *Against Ursacius and Valens*, which first appeared shortly after Hilary had been exiled by the Council of Biterrae in 356.[6] It was a polemic directed against the Illyrican bishops Ursacius of Singidunum and Valens of Mursa, who had assisted Constantius in implementing his western ecclesiastical policy (see § II below), and it sought 'to reveal to the public a grave and many-sided affair, intricate through diabolical deceptions, subtle on the part of the heretics, prejudged through many people's dissimulation and fear' (*Coll. Antiar. Par.* B.I.4). Hilary had assembled a range of material from all sides in the Christological dispute, and he presented it as a compilation of documents connected by narrative passages from his own pen so that readers could arrive at their own conclusions about the controversy rather than accept the opinions of others (*Coll. Antiar. Par.* B.1.7). Hilary used a similar technique in his other major polemic, the *Against Auxentius*, written after his failed effort to oust Auxentius of Milan from his see in 364. Here Hilary begins with an address to his allies, at the end of which he appends a copy of the credal statement made by Auxentius in his appeal to Valentinian I (*C. Aux.* 13–15). Again Hilary is presenting his audience with documentary evidence from which they may draw their own conclusions, in this case as to the orthodoxy of Auxentius' profession of faith.

[6] For the date of the first stage of composition of the *Against Ursacius and Valens*: Smulders 1995, 17–22. The work is commonly known as the *Collectanea Antiariana Parisina*, and is preserved in a much mutilated state, since the folios of the original text seem to have become jumbled before it was copied into the sole surviving manuscript, now in the *Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal* in Paris (cod. 403, fols. 67r–113v). To this the editor of the text attached as an Appendix some related documents on the Council of Serdica (AD 343) which were preserved in other manuscripts. For a full discussion of this complex textual history see Smulders 1995, 1–17.

Such an arrangement of documentary evidence owed much to the developing polemical strategies of Christian bishops. Disputants at doctrinal church councils, for example, produced documentary evidence in order to refute the arguments of the opposition. A dramatic example known to Hilary was the daring gesture of Bishop Eusebius of Vercelli who, at the Council of Milan in 355, sought to undermine Constantius II's ecclesiastical policies by producing a copy of the Nicene creed for all the bishops present to sign.[7] Similarly, literary works composed in the combative milieu of doctrinal controversies adopted the same strategy of quoting documents verbatim. For example, the success of many of Athanasius of Alexandria's polemical works depended on the careful juxtaposition of 'orthodox' and 'heretical' documents.[8] In stark contrast, the *Against Constantius* does not include such textual testimonia to buttress its argument: rather, the document it incorporates is a pseudo-document, a fictional speech to the emperor. Taken as a whole, the work is an elaborately wrought rhetorical *tour de force* designed to pillory every aspect of the emperor's religious policy. Yet the full genius of Hilary's diatribe can only be appreciated in the context of his relations with Constantius.

II *Date and composition*

The relationship of the *Against Constantius* to Hilary's dealings with Constantius is a fraught issue, not least because there has been considerable debate as to the date of the work. An entry in Jerome's thumbnail biography of Hilary states that 'also by him is the small book *To the Emperor Constantius* (*Ad Constantium imperatorem*), which he presented while he was living in Constantinople, and another *Against Constantius,* which he wrote after the emperor's death' (*De uir. ill.* 100). Bearing in mind the violent language of the diatribe against the emperor, a date after Constantius' death might seem attractive: this assumes that Hilary would not want to bring the wrath of the emperor down on his head.[9] But this is at odds with

[7] The event is recorded by Hilary in *Coll. Antiar. Par., Appendix* 2.3.2; cf. McLynn 1994, 17–18 for an analysis of Eusebius' strategy.

[8] Warmington 1986, 7-16.

[9] It is accepted by Hanson 1988, 470 ('Needless to say, it was not published till after the death of Constantius') and by Setton 1941, 98–9.

Hilary's own testimony that he is addressing the western episcopate 'after the exiles of Paulinus, Eusebius, Lucifer and Dionysius, in the fifth year since (*quinto abhinc anno*) I was separated, along with the Gallic bishops, from communion with Saturninus, Ursacius and Valens' (*In Const.* 2.3–6). Here Hilary refers to the consequences of Constantius II's visit to the western provinces in the mid 350s. Following his defeat of the western usurper Magnentius in 353, Constantius sought to impose his own theological views on the western episcopate, a task in which he was enthusiastically assisted by bishops Saturninus of Arles, Ursacius of Singidunum and Valens of Mursa. Constantius sought to impose the doctrine of *homoios*, which asserted that Christ was 'like' God the Father, but passed over the thorny issue of substance (*ousia*); in addition, he also demanded the condemnation of Athanasius, the recalcitrant bishop of Alexandria who had repeatedly obstructed Constantius' ecclesiastical policies in the East. When western bishops were confronted with the emperor's demands, many submitted. But at Arles in 353, Paulinus of Trier, an old friend of Athanasius, refused; two years later in Milan, Eusebius of Vercelli, Lucifer of Cagliari and Dionysius of Milan joined this resistance. All four were exiled to the East. Shortly afterwards, early in 356, a further synod convened at Biterrae in southern Gaul, and it was here that Hilary was condemned and exiled.[10] Hilary dates his composition of the *Against Constantius* to the fifth year after his exile, meaning that it was written in 360, *before* the death of Constantius II.

The general consensus amongst modern scholars is to accept this date, but the most recent editor of the work has offered a rather more elaborate dating, based on the argument that the *Against Constantius* looks like two works pasted together: one a communication to the bishops of the West (*In Const.* 2–6, 12–15), the other an address to the emperor (7–11, 16–27). It is suggested that there were several stages of composition, straddling the period between Hilary's return from exile in early 360 to the months after Constantius' death in November 361. This view allows for composition of the anti-Constantian diatribe while the emperor was still alive, but sees Hilary as revising the whole text for public consumption afterwards, at which point the first section was added.[11]

[10] Borchardt 1966, 24–37; for the circumstances cf. Barnes 1992.

[11] Rocher 1987, 29–38.

Yet such a complex process of composition is unnecessary. The work as a whole has thematic unity, arguing cogently—if sometimes disingenuously—against Constantius' ecclesiastical policies. Moreover, the first section reads as if Constantius is very much alive, since Hilary calls the western bishops to accept martyrdom should that be necessary (1.5).[12] Such a fate would hardly be expected if Constantius was dead: the new emperor, Julian, had begun his reign with a bloody purge of his predecessor's ministers and a restoration of pagan cult practices, while his own writings emphasized that he felt nothing but contempt for his predecessor.[13] Plainly Julian was not going to be upset by anyone vilifying Constantius' memory. The call to martyrdom only makes sense, therefore, if Constantius, who is presented throughout the work as a persecutor of unprecedented ferocity, is still alive. It is most sensible to assume that the whole work was written in 360, as Hilary states, and that the date assigned to it by Jerome is an error or mistaken inference based on the content of the work.

III *Hilary and Constantius*

By early 360, ecclesiastical politics had changed considerably since the councils of Arles (353) and Milan (355), a factor which is crucial to understanding the *Against Constantius.* As an exile in the East, Hilary had joined forces with Eusebius of Vercelli, and by 359 the two were actively engaged in efforts to obtain agreement between both those bishops subscribing to *homoousios* ('of the same substance') and those who adhered to *homoiousios* ('of similar substance'). The reason for this *rapprochement* was that by now a group of theologians had emerged who opted for an altogether different creed which emphasized a difference in substance (*heterousios*), but which was caricatured by its opponents as *anomoios*, implying that Christ and the Father were utterly 'unlike' in all respects.[14] This shifted the burden of the argument to proving the likeness or identity of Christ's and the Father's substance. To Eusebius and Hilary, the difference between *homoousios* and *homoiousios* now

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[12] This is the substance of Barnes' criticism (1988, 610) in his review of Rocher 1987.

[13] Bowersock 1978, 55–65.

[14] On the difficulty of these definitions see Hanson 1988, 598–636.

seemed irrelevant in the face of opposition which denied any 'likeness' of *ousia* ('substance'). But not all proponents of *homoousios* were happy with the new alliance: in particular, one of Hilary's and Eusebius' fellow exiles, Lucifer of Cagliari, worked hard to undermine their efforts.[15]

In 359 Constantius made a last desperate effort to achieve theological uniformity throughout the empire, convening the western bishops at Rimini, the easterners at Seleucia. He hoped that all would subscribe to *homoios* (that Christ was 'like' God), but once again he was frustrated and had to resort to intimidation, incarcerating the western council's delegation at Nike in Thrace until they agreed to subscribe. By the beginning of 360, however, Constantius' regime was losing its grip on many areas of policy: in the East there loomed the certainty of renewed war with Persia, while in the West the proclamation of Julian as Augustus by his army at Paris threatened to plunge the empire into civil war. Ecclesiastical policy was faring no better. Not only had the councils of 359 failed to deliver the Christological uniformity that Constantius so desired, but some of the western bishops whom he had exiled in the 350s were making their way back home without seeking his permission; among them was Hilary of Poitiers.

As soon as he returned home, Hilary sought to overturn Constantius' ecclesiastical achievements. At a council convened in Paris (AD 360/1), and perhaps also at several others, Hilary sought to make the western episcopate aware of the crimes Constantius had been perpetrating on the eastern Church. More forcefully, he sought the deposition of those bishops whom Constantius had imposed in place of churchmen exiled at the councils of the mid 350s. Hilary's most notorious action was his failed attempt in 364 to oust Auxentius, who had held the bishopric of Milan since Dionysius had been expelled after the Milanese council of 355.[16] Literary polemic was as much a part of this endeavour as personal intervention. His failure at Milan prompted the acerbic *Against Auxentius*, and preparation of a new edition of his historical work against Valens of Mursa and Ursacius of Singidunum, Constantius' willing agents.[17] Even when he was at his most reflective, as in his

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[15] Hanson 1988, 508–16.
[16] Williams 1992, 7–22.
[17] Smulders 1995, 17–23.

great anti-homoian treatise *On the Trinity*, Hilary's objective was still the undoing of Constantius' achievements.

Written soon after his return to Gaul early in 360, the *Against Constantius* was part of Hilary's strategy. In it he sought to persuade his episcopal colleagues to join his resistance to Constantius' policies, and to implement the programme of reconciliation which he and Eusebius of Vercelli had begun in the East. Considerable persuasion was necessary. Even if Julian now controlled most of the western provinces there could be no guarantee that he would be any more successful than Magnentius had been a decade earlier: there was a very real threat that Constantius might reassert his power in the West and exact revenge on wayward bishops.

There were various areas where western bishops would require reassurance. For a start, some might balk at the thought of allying themselves with the advocates of *homoiousios* and, like Lucifer of Cagliari, seek to obstruct the campaign. Hilary is at pains to justify his *rapprochement* with the eastern bishops who proclaimed *homoiousios*. He asserts that their views are orthodox, since they believe 'that the Son proceeds from God, that is from the substance of God, and that he always existed' (12.18–20). Hilary then identifies his main theological enemies: 'those who assert nothing unless it is most profane, denying that anything can be like the substance of God, or that any generation from God can exist, but (saying) that Christ was created' (12.20–3). This is a clear reference to the doctrine of *heterousios*, which held that Father and Son were of different substance. It is also, however, a subtle caricature of that position. Hilary calls this creed not *heterousios*, but *anomoeousion* (12.20), literally meaning that it asserted utter dissimilarity of substance rather than the less easily definable 'difference'. This was deliberately disingenuous, and it helped Hilary smoothe over the difficulty of his alliance with homoiousian bishops. The message of Hilary's theological reasoning is that it was not important whether one believes that Christ's substance was similar to or identical to the Father's. What was at issue was whether or not Christ's substance bore *any* likeness to the Father's.

Just as Hilary's polemical agenda led him to exaggerate the beliefs of his opponents, so it brought him to pen such a damning portrait of Constantius. The attitude to the emperor which Hilary expresses in the *Against Constantius* is actually a startling volte face. Shortly before he left Constantinople to return to Gaul, Hilary had

begged Constantius for an audience. His letter requesting this meeting survives as the *To the Emperor Constantius* (*Ad Constantium*), and it displays an extremely deferential attitude to Constantius.[18] Hilary wrote in order to persuade Constantius of the folly of searching for a new creed at Seleucia and Rimini (*Ad Const.* 5–9). He sought also to demonstrate his own innocence against the charges which had brought the sentence of exile at Biterrae (*Ad Const.* 2). Hilary is concerned throughout to distance Constantius, and Julian, from any of these errors. He attributes the travesty of justice at Biterrae to the calumny of a faction who deliberately misled the Augustus and his Caesar.[19] He takes care to praise Constantius' known ambitions: the Augustus is described as 'the lord Emperor Constantius who, as a man of blessed and religious will, desires a faith according to what is in the Scriptures' (*Ad Const.* 8.1); he is a ruler who strives for 'peace between East and West' (*Ad Const.* 10.2).[20] In the course of the letter, Constantius is addressed in terms such as 'the most pious emperor', 'good and religious', and 'the best and most religious emperor'.[21] These phrases conform to the customary hyperbole of late Roman social discourse. This is hardly surprising since Hilary sought to plead a controversial case: the *To the Emperor Constantius* shows that he knew precisely how to couch his request in terms which vaunted the emperor's virtues, commended his ambitions, and distanced him from any wrongdoing.

In one aspect, however, the *To the Emperor Constantius* does point forward to the panegyrical forms that Hilary was to pervert in the *Against Constantius*. When reminding Constantius that there was no need to seek a new creed because the apostolic one existed already, he invoked the authority of the Council of Nicaea: 'after the synod gathered at Nicaea we understand that our only task is to take our turn to subscribe to the faith' (*Ad Const.* 5.1). Hilary deliberately refers to an event associated with the emperor's father, Constantine the Great. It was a popular ploy on the part of Christian authors hoping to draw Constantius back to the Nicene fold, and it derives in part from the special relationship that was seen to exist between

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[18] References are by chapter and section division in the edition of Feder 1916.

[19] *Ad Const.* 2.2 'you, Augustus, have been cheated, and your Caesar has been deceived.'

[20] Pietri 1989, 113–72.

[21] *Ad Const.* 1 'piissime imperator', 'bonus ac religiosus'; 2 'imperatorem pium'; 3: 'dignantissime imperator'; 4 'optime ac religiosissime imperator'.

Constantius and his father.[22] Hilary was to return to the theme, with devastating effect, in the *Against Constantius.*

IV *The anti-panegyric*

When Hilary wrote the *To the Emperor Constantius* he still hoped that Constantius could be brought to see reason and accept that the proclamation of the homoian creed at the councils of Seleucia and Rimini (AD 359) had been an error. Within months, however, he had become disillusioned with the emperor, and the *Against Constantius* gave full vent to his disappointment and anger. A large part of his condemnation of Constantius' position was rooted in complex theological issues, particularly the emperor's refusal to accept the equality of Father and Son. Several sections of the *Against Constantius* constitute an extended refutation of the emperor's beliefs, presented in the form of a closely argued theological diatribe. At *Against Constantius* 16–22, Hilary presents a series of counter-arguments to Constantius' position, drawing heavily on Scripture, particularly the Gospel of John and the Pauline Epistles.[23] In these passages, and in those addressed directly to the episcopate, the *Against Constantius* is at its most self-consciously theological.

Embedded in this theological hectoring, however, is another agenda expressed in terms which pervert the tropes of secular panegyric. This polemic covers a variety of issues which, when read together, invalidate Constantius' position as emperor. In the first place, Constantius' wicked judgements have been delivered by the emperor in person. Having wreaked havoc in the East, Constantius turned his attention westwards, intervening at Trier, Milan, Rome and Toulouse.[24] Personal intervention by emperors was an important topic in imperial panegyric, in which it was given symbolic form in accounts of the ceremony of imperial *aduentus.* This was typically the arrival of an emperor, attended by

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22 See in detail Humphries 1997, 450–4.

23 Rocher 1987, 82–4, 201–11 app. crit.

24 *In Const.* 11.13–14 'the whole of the East is subject to either terror or war'; 11.15–16 'you bear all your arms against the faith of the West, and you turn your armies on Christ's sheep'; 11.18–19 'you despoiled the holy church of Trier'; 11.23–4 'you terrorized the most pious people of Milan'; 11.29–30 'next you turned your war against Rome'; 11.32–3 'what terrors did you then exercise against the church of Toulouse.'

the glittering entourage of his court, in a city, where he received the enthusiastic greetings of his subjects.[25] Alternatively, as in Claudius Mamertinus' panegyric on Julian, *aduentus* could become the emperor's progress through a region.[26] Accounts of imperial arrival and progress were occasions for flattery of an emperor's good government. Julian's Danubian journey, for instance, saw cities granted remission of taxes and barbarians instilled with fear (*Pan. Lat.* III.7–9). Menander Rhetor's guide to the composition of speeches dealing with arrivals summarizes the theory:

> You should give a vivid portrayal of the situation in which [the cities being visited] were badly treated by the previous governor ... Then go on: 'When night and darkness covered the world, you were seen like the sun, and at once dissolved all the difficulties ... All men breathed again, when dangers passed over like a cloud'.
>
> (378.17–26 trans. Russell and Wilson)

Hilary's account of Constantius' western progress reads as a parody of conventional *aduentus.* Instead of bringing reform and liberty, Constantius brought war and terror to the western churches. The amount of negative military imagery in the passage is noteworthy. Constantius is described as having borne all his arms (*omnia arma contulisti*) against the western churches and turned his troops (*exercitus tuos conuertisti*) against Christ's flock. He despoiled (*spoliasti*) the church of Trier, terrorized the people of Milan with his fury (*furoris tui terrore*), and waged war on Rome (*uertisti ... bellum tuum*). When Hilary describes Constantius' actions against Toulouse, he recounts how the emperor exercised (*exercuisti*) his furies just as he might have exercised his troops.[27] Achievements in war are a standard feature of imperial panegyric, but here Hilary has perverted the convention, showing Constantius waging war on the churches under his own protection.

Such a description went against what Constantius perceived to be the spirit of his western expedition, when his ambition had been to liberate the western provinces from Magnentius' tyranny. Indeed, the emperor's success in this venture had included a ceremonial *aduentus* at Rome in 357, where the Constantinopolitian orator Themistius delivered a panegyric (*Or.* 3) celebrating the West's

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[25] In general see MacCormack 17–61.

[26] *Pan. Lat.* III.7.1–3, esp. 2 where Julian's voyage down the Danube is described as a *pompa*; cf. Lieu 1989, 11.

[27] *OLD* s.v. *exerceo.* (p.640).

new-found liberty. Some might have grumbled that the emperor, who had 'triumphed over Roman blood' rather than Rome's external enemies, did not deserve such pomp and circumstance, but this did not perturb Constantius who was determined that his *aduentus* should be sufficiently majestic (Amm. Marc. 16.10.1–2).[28] In such circumstances, Hilary's description of Constantius' progress through the western empire as a violent and terrible purge of the Church reads as a merciless satire of the emperor's ambitions.

In addition to being the harbinger of war and disruption, Constantius is also a terrible persecutor, worse even than Nero, Decius and Galerius (*In Const.* 4.5; 7.1–6; 8.1–12; 11.16–17). This is the second anti-panegyrical element in the *Against Constantius*. Comparison with previous emperors is a standard feature of encomium, where the normal procedure was to emphasize the degree to which the living emperor exceeded the virtues of his predecessors. Menander Rhetor encapsulates the concept clearly:

> You should then proceed to the most complete comparison, examining [the ruler's] reign in comparison with preceding reigns, not disparaging them ... but admiring them while granting perfection to the present (376.31–377.2).

Hilary clearly satirizes the convention: rather than choose good *exempla* for Constantius, he compares him to the worst persecutors of Christian history; worse still, he reserves the greatest display of infamy for Constantius himself.

The comparison with Nero, Decius and Galerius works on another level too. Hilary draws a more direct connection between them and Constantius, advising the emperor that they are his ancestors (*In Const.* 9.15 *patres tui*). Again this perverts panegyrical convention. Both Quintilian (*Inst.* 3.7.10) and Menander Rhetor (371.3–4) insist that a distinguished ancestry should be emphasized, or a poor one worked up. Imperial panegyrists felt free to invent a lineage if necessary. In 310, an anonymous Gallic panegyrist made Constantine the descendant of Claudius II Gothicus, insisting that while both emperors had restored imperial security, Constantine had excelled simply because of the greater length of his reign (*Pan. Lat.* VI.2.2–3). The theme was taken up a year later by another panegyrist (*Pan. Lat.* V.2.5), and it was subsequently

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[28] MacCormack 39–45.

adopted as part of Constantine's dynastic propaganda on inscriptions and coins.[29] The choice was plainly determined by the good reputation of Claudius II in the historical tradition, and as such it provides a positive analogy for the negative effect which Hilary sought to achieve, by making Constantius the descendant of Nero, Decius and Galerius. Rather than working up Constantius' ancestry, Hilary invented a new one that vilified the emperor as the scion of a house of persecutors.

Closely related to this insult is Hilary's assertion that Constantius' actions set him in direct opposition to his father, Constantine the Great. Hilary asserts that Constantine's achievements at the Council of Nicaea (325) were considered anathema by Constantius (*In Const.* 27.13–17), and in the peroration the charges he makes include the claim that he was a rebel against his father's piety (27.25–7). This is a stinging criticism indeed, since, more than any of his brothers, Constantius seems to have considered that he and his father enjoyed a special relationship. Constantius was the only one of Constantine's sons to attend his father's funeral at Constantinople in 337, and so he was the only one able to give that display of filial *pietas* which was an important feature of dynastic funerals.[30]

Those wishing to cultivate Constantius' favour tended to exaggerate the similarities between him and his father. One such individual was Bishop Cyril of Jerusalem, who sought the emperor's support in the struggle to retain his see in the face of the hostility of Bishop Acacius of Caesarea.[31] In a letter written to Constantius in 351, Cyril recounted how a flaming cross had appeared in the sky over Jerusalem and assured the emperor that this was a sign of the victory he was about to enjoy in his conflict with the western usurper Magnentius (*Ep. Const.* 2, 3, 5). Cyril was drawing an obvious parallel between Constantius and his father: just as Constantine's victory over Maxentius in 312 had been preceded by the famous vision which precipitated his conversion to Christianity, so Constantius' defeat of Magnentius was now certain in the light of this heavenly apparition.[32] Conversely, it soon became a common

[29] Nixon and Rodgers 219–20 n.6.

[30] Eus. *VC* 4.70.1–2; cf. MacCormack 115–21 on the symbolism of dynastic funerals.

[31] Cf. Chadwick 1960, 174–5 n.10.

[32] Pietri 1989, 146–8.

feature of polemical attacks on Constantius to emphasize the extent to which he had betrayed Constantine's memory. The idea was first used by Athanasius of Alexandria (e.g. *Hist. Ar*. 50–1), but the outspoken master of this device was Hilary of Poitiers: by emphasizing the extent to which Constantius had betrayed his father's memory and by claiming that he was descended not from Constantine but from Nero, Decius and Galerius, Hilary made it a crucial element in the argument of the *Against Constantius*.[33]

As a final element in his parody of imperial panegyric, Hilary calls into question the very legitimacy of Constantius' rule. Hilary explicitly calls Constantius *tyrannus*, a tyrant (*In Const.* 7.5), and brands his regime *tyrannis*, a tyranny (11.3). This is strong language indeed, and it goes further than many imperial panegyrists' denunciations of usurpers. Carausius, for instance, is stigmatized by Tetrarchic panegyrists as a 'pirate' engaged in 'nefarious brigandage' (*Pan. Lat.* VIII.12.1); while to Constantine's encomiasts Maxentius is a 'monster', 'ignoble' and the 'vilest of men' (*Pan. Lat.* XII.14.2). Indeed the terms *tyrannus* and *tyrannis* are comparatively rare in Latin panegyrics. Before Hilary's *Against Constantius* they are used only sporadically by Pliny the Younger of Domitian in his address to Trajan and by Nazarius to describe Maxentius in his 321 panegyric on Constantine.[34] Rather, the systematic use of *tyrannus* and *tyrannis* only occurs with Pacatus' panegyric on Theodosius I in 389 where the terms are applied to Magnus Maximus and his regime.[35] Yet *tyrannus* and *tyrannis* had been part of the Roman language of political vilification since the early fourth century. In the dedicatory inscription on the arch of Constantine in Rome, Maxentius, who is not mentioned by name, is designated *tyrannus* (*CIL* 6.1139).[36] Later Latin historians, such as Ammianus Marcellinus and the anonymous authors of the *Historia Augusta*, used the words freely to describe usurpers.[37] In Greek, the terms had a longer usage: the historians Cassius Dio and Herodian use τύραννος and τυραννίς in the late-antique sense to identify political rivals,

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[33] Full analysis in Humphries 1997, 454–62.

[34] The references are collected by Janson 1979, 780.

[35] *Pan. Lat.* II.2.3; 23.1; 24.5; 28.3, 5; 31.2; 35.1; 37.2–3; 39.4; 40.4; 42.2–3; 43.3; 44.3.

[36] For portrayals of Maxentius as a *tyrannus* or τύραννος, cf. Grünewald 1990, 64–71.

[37] For Ammianus: Chiabò 1983, II 806. For the *Historia Augusta*: Lessing 1964, 685–6; cf. Paschoud 1997.

as do Eusebius, Themistius, Julian and Libanius in oratorical works, while Athanasius had employed them with specific reference to Constantius.[38] So Hilary's designation of Constantius as *tyrannus* and his regime as *tyrannis* was not unprecedented.

The meaning of *tyrannus* and *tyrannis* calls for clarification. Whereas it is usually assumed that in late antiquity the terms simply mean 'usurper' and 'usurpation',[39] Valerio Neri has shown recently that their meaning is more nuanced. The words indicated that a regime lacked legitimacy, while the *tyrannus* himself acted without divine sanction.[40] The principle of divine election had long been central to Roman imperial ideology, receiving an important boost with the restoration of political and military stability by Diocletian. With Constantine's conversion to Christianity, far from disappearing from the theoretical underpinning of the imperial regime, divine election was given a new Christian twist.[41] The emperor now became the vicegerent of the Christian God on earth, and the maintenance of peace not only in the empire, but in the Church as well, became an important imperial duty. Hence Constantine, shortly after his Christian victory at the Milvian Bridge in 312, sought to impose unity on the Carthaginian Church divided by the Donatist schism.[42] Such ideas were inherited by Constantius II, who saw the unification of the Church in East and West as an important task for his expedition to the western provinces in the 350s.

Questions about the legitimacy of Constantius' rule and the extent to which it enjoyed divine sanction are both present in Hilary's diatribe. At the very outset of his personal assault on Constantius, Hilary proclaims that the emperor is 'a tyrant (*tyrannus*) not just in human but in divine affairs' (7.1–5). Constantius is a typical *tyrannus*, suppressing freedom (*libertas*) and ignoring truth (*ueritas*), in this case Christian truth. Addressing the western episcopate, Hilary evokes the memory of how Constantius 'did not

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38 Neri 1997. For Athanasius: Müller 1952, 1458.

39 E.g. Alan Cameron 1970, 103 'the word [*tyrannus*] bears the quite specific meaning "usurper" at this period.'

40 Neri 1997, esp. 72–80.

41 Fears 1977, esp. 296–310.

42 See, for example, the Constantinian letters contained in Eus. *HE* 10.5. 18–24 and *Corpus Optati* 3 (I 153–8 ed. Maier, *Le Dossier du donatisme*; English trans. in M. Edwards, *Optatus: Against the Donatists*, Translated Texts for Historians 27 (Liverpool, 1997) 181–4).

push us out of confinement towards freedom, but burdened us with slavery within the palace' (5.4–5). Elsewhere he asks Constantius if he is capable of recognizing the truth of Christian prophecy (9.6–7). He plainly anticipates a negative answer, for he goes on to reiterate his accusation that Constantius is a persecutor. This time, however, Hilary describes Constantius' enemies not as those bishops exiled at the western councils of the mid 350s, but as God and Christ themselves. Hilary does this in a manner which ought to convince Constantius of his illegitimacy: 'you vie against God the Father, as if He was deceitful' (9.16–17). As with so many other themes in his address, Hilary reiterates his arguments on Constantius' illegitimacy in the peroration: 'you attack with impiety ... the judgements of men and God. Yet you do not have the right, despite holding the imperial power now, to make judgements also for what is to come' (27.18–20).

V *Hilary's polemical purpose*

Hilary presents Constantius as a malevolent emperor, worse than the basest of his predecessors, an impious transgressor against the good name and achievements of his father, and a tyrant who holds his power illegitimately, both as a disrupter of human affairs and as a rebel against the divine order. In every sense Constantius is the opposite of a good emperor as defined by imperial panegyric. What is most remarkable about the *Against Constantius,* however, is that it was penned (and presumably disseminated) while its target was still alive. To be sure, Hilary wrote in that part of the western empire now controlled by the rebellious forces of the Caesar Julian, but—as we have seen—that was no guarantee of immunity from Constantius' wrath.

A daring work, then, but to what purpose? Persuading the western episcopate of the heresy of the emperor's theological position did not necessarily demand such a savage attack on his person: an exegetical work would surely have sufficed. I suggest, therefore, that those sections of the *Against Constantius* which read as an address to Constantius himself were intended to ridicule Constantius, whose ecclesiastical policies Hilary wanted the Gallic bishops to reject. By systematically demolishing the ideological props of Constantius' reign, so Hilary would show the absurdity of

adhering to any theological settlement the emperor might hope to impose. Yet the *Against Constantius* is more vicious than that: the criticisms of his regime are made in a direct address to the emperor, and as such they belong to an established form of political humour.

Rhetorical handbooks had long advocated the inversion of principles of encomium to construct the *psogos*, or invective.[43] Part of this strategy involved the inclusion of jokes which belittled the achievements, or even the character, of one's political opponent. Inducing laughter at the expense of one's enemies was a crucial tool in reducing the threat that they posed.[44] In the late empire, such ridicule could be heaped upon pretenders to the throne. Ammianus Marcellinus' account of the usurpation of Procopius provides a neat example, in that, although the text is a historical one, it demonstrates strong conformity to the ideals of imperial legitimacy.[45] When Procopius was proclaimed emperor by a group of soldiers at Constantinople in 365, his investiture was, as Ammianus explicitly states, a laughable (*ludibriosus*) mockery of imperial ceremonial: the emperor looked no more auspicious than a palace attendant or slave, and since no purple cloak could be found he had to make do with a scrap of purple cloth, clutched between his fingers (Amm. Marc. 26.6.15–16). Ammianus made Procopius' elevation into a joke, just as any good writer of invective would have done, by emphasizing the degree to which it differed from genuine imperial acclamations. This was precisely the role of humour in invective: jokes consisted of jibes demonstrating how the target of a speech deviated from accepted social and political norms.[46]

This was precisely what Hilary sought to achieve in *Against Constantius*, and it explains why so much of the work is written as a direct address to the emperor. By inverting the conventions of imperial panegyric, Hilary demonstrated how Constantius did not conform to the ideal image of an emperor of the house of

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43 Wilken (1983, 95–127) provides an excellent guide to this 'rhetoric of abuse' and offers numerous late-antique parallels.

44 See, above all, Corbeill 1996—an excellent study.

45 See, in detail, Matthews 1989, 191–203, 236–7.

46 Corbeill 1996, *passim*, esp. 6 'At Rome, deviant behavior is behavior that public speakers so define in their invective. As they label deviance through political humor, the positive values of society ... become reinforced by contrast.'

Constantine. By parodying Constantius' *aduentus*, creating for him a new ancestry, denying him any special relationship with Constantine, and discounting the legitimacy of his reign, Hilary undermined those ambitions and ideals which Constantius held most dear. Far from emerging from the work as a paragon of imperial virtue—as Constantius would have appeared in a panegyric—the lasting image of the emperor created by *Against Constantius* is that of a bestial tyrant waging war on the Church.

Conclusion

Timothy Barnes concluded his review of André Rocher's recent edition of the *Against Constantius* by declaring that the work 'has not yet disclosed all its secrets.'[47] This essay has sought to demonstrate that when Hilary composed the piece, he had in mind the conventions of imperial panegyric, and that he deliberately perverted them to pillory Constantius II. The *Against Constantius* has rarely been considered among Hilary's major works. Hanson's great history of the fourth-century Christological conflict uses it as a source, but never considers it in its own right, while Borchardt's monograph on Hilary's involvement in the conflict did little more than reiterate the view that in the *Against Constantius* 'Hilary was so preoccupied with the theological problem that he did not formulate any theory about the relation [*sic*] between Church and State'.[48] Setton and Opelt both knew better, showing how in the *Against Constantius* Hilary marshalled his rhetorical techniques to devastating effect against the emperor.[49] Yet neither author made explicit comparisons between Hilary's attack and the conventions of imperial panegyric. As a consequence, the anti-panegyrical format of those sections of the *Against Constantius* directly addressed to the emperor has gone unrecognized.

Yet it is these anti-panegyrical features which make the *Against Constantius* a unique work: not even the violent diatribes of Lucifer of Cagliari were so devastating in their critique of Constantius,

[47] Barnes 1988, 611.

[48] Hanson's long chapter on Hilary (1988, 459–501) is concerned largely with works such as the *De synodis* and *De Trinitate*; Borchardt 1966, 177, citing H. Berkhof, *De Kerk en de Keizer* (Amsterdam, 1946) 130.

[49] Setton 1941, 98–103; Opelt 1973.

since they failed to engage with the theoretical basis of the emperor's regime. They show that Hilary was consciously constructing an argument against the legitimacy of Constantius' rule, and implicit in them is a theory of just government by a Christian emperor. The close correlation between the conventions of imperial panegyric and the construction of Hilary's invective argues that the *Against Constantius* was consciously conceived as a parody. Hilary was well equipped to produce such a work. His Latinity suggests an accomplished education covering the full range of rhetorical devices.[50] Such indeed was the verdict of Jerome who enthuses about Hilary's literary accomplishments, drawing direct parallels between him and Quintilian, and acclaiming his eloquence which gushes forth like the river Rhône of his Gallic homeland.[51]

None of this is to deny that the *Against Constantius* is not fundamentally a Christian work, as opposed to a purely secular polemic: the extensive theological sections are enough to demonstrate that it was destined for an audience of bishops who required instruction in the latest theological problems thrown up by the Christological controversy. At the same time, however, Hilary used the work as a vehicle for a violent diatribe against Constantius which he chose to couch in terms which parodied imperial panegyric. His choice should not be too surprising. Hilary and his audience would without doubt have been familiar with the rhetoric of imperial propaganda in all its manifestations. They lived in a world saturated by the language of power: civic buildings and court and urban rituals were all part of a complex web of images by which the nature of power was made manifest in the later Roman empire.[52] This symbolism of power and its attendant rhetoric pervaded the social discourse of the period. Hence the Emperor Julian, writing to the citizens of Athens, began his letter by eulogizing the city's past in terms identical to those prescribed by Menander Rhetor for civic encomia.[53] Likewise, in the passage from which I began this investigation, Rufinus described Hilary's progress through the western empire in terms of the light of Christian truth which he

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[50] Buttell 1933, *passim*.

[51] Jerome, *Ep.* 70.5; id., *In Gal. lib. II*, praef. Cf. Doignon 1971, 27–30, 49–55.

[52] In detail, see Brown 1992; Averil Cameron 1991; L'Orange 1965.

[53] Julian, *Ep. ad Ath.* 268a–70c; cf. Menander Rhetor 353.4–367.8.

and his colleague bishop Eusebius of Vercelli radiated, echoing a standard convention of panegyrical accounts of imperial *aduentus*.[54] Hilary's savage humour perverted this language by turning it against the very person who should have been praised by it. To be sure, it only forms part of his invective, but the fact that Hilary chose to express himself in such anti-panegyrical terms is a reminder of how pervasive in late-antique society was the propaganda of power.[55]

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[54] Rufinus, *HE* 10.32, recordes how Hilary and Eusebius 'radiated like magnificent lights of the world' (*uelut magnifica quaedam mundi lumina ... radiarunt*); cf. *Pan. Lat.* XI.10.4 on how, when Diocletian and Maximian arrived in Italy in 291, 'from each summit of the Alps your deity first shone forth, a clearer light spread all over Italy' (*ut primum ex utrisque Alpium iugis uestrum numen effulsit, tota Italia clarior lux diffusa*). The image is explicitly recommended by Menander Rhetor (378. 21–3); cf. MacCormack 29.

[55] My thanks to Shaun Tougher for many illuminating discussions on Constantius II, to Roger Rees who first asked me if I thought the *In Constantium* was meant to be funny, and above all to Mary Whitby for her invitation to contribute, her editorial assistance, and her extraordinary patience. All errors and shortcomings are my own.

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CHAPTER NINE

VENANTIUS FORTUNATUS: PANEGYRIC IN MEROVINGIAN GAUL

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By the late sixth century, Gaul, once a Roman province, was ruled by the Merovingians. Culturally the Greeks had once taken their Roman captors captive;[1] now, in their turn, the Gallo-Romans had similarly prevailed over their conquerors. The literary and cultural traditions of the Gallo-Romans were eagerly assimilated by the Merovingians as a vital part of their inheritance as rulers of this country.[2] The Italian poet, Venantius Fortunatus, thus found fertile ground for drawing upon his formal rhetorical training to take an active part as a panegyrist in Merovingian political life, and to develop the genre as a strong and relevant tool for communication and negotiation in the tangled and bloody strands of Merovingian state and ecclesiastical politics.

Over thirty years or so of substantial output, we can see the poet developing in confidence and versatility as a panegyrist. His earliest poems, to the Merovingian king Sigibert and to his court officials and bishops (AD 566–8), were skilful compositions, dealing diplomatically with personalities and issues, but mainly concerned to establish the poet's position in influential circles of patronage. In the panegyric to King Charibert, delivered a year or so later, Fortunatus mediated firmly between the Church and the king; and from that point, he became established as a spokesman for the ex-queen Radegund in Poitiers,[3] where he made his home, for his friend Gregory, Bishop of Tours,[4] and for the interests of

[1] Horace, *Epistles* 2.1.156 'Greece, captured, conquered her fierce captor and invaded rural Latium with the arts.'

[2] See George 1992, 11–18; Wood 1994, 20–32; Riché 1976, 239–43.

[3] For Radegund see George 1992, 30–1 n.155, 161–77; van Dam 1993, 30–40, 98–9; Wood 1994, 136–9.

[4] For Gregory of Tours see George 1992, 124–31; James 1991, *passim*; van

their communities in the vicissitudes of feuding between the Merovingian kings.

This considerable body of work allows us to see a poet, rooted by his education and early training in the mainstream classical tradition, working in the context of a markedly changing culture to develop and adapt the traditions of the past to fulfil what had always been the basic role of the panegyrist, that of political commentator and mediator. Over the years, his poems show an increasing sophistication in rising to the demands of specific and varied occasions, handling even dangerous issues sensitively and persuasively, drawing appropriately on a range of styles and resonances, from the personal and informal to formal and imperial magnificence. Throughout, however, there is a steady and increasingly firm and articulate standpoint on the duties of Church and king, and the nature of the relationship between them.

The poet

Venantius Honorius Clementianus Fortunatus was born in Duplavis, near Treviso, probably around 540, and moved to Ravenna to receive a traditional classical education.[5] Though past the heyday of Theoderic, Ravenna was still a place of power and magnificence.[6] The rich ceremonial and the visual splendour of this setting, encapsulated in the mosaics of San Vitale, with which Fortunatus would have been familiar,[7] would have ensured that the poet's rhetorical training was one of practical experience, not merely an exercise in book learning.

But as well as his traditional education as a Roman rhetorician, which enabled him to offer the desirable commodity of *Romanitas* ('Roman-ness') to his Merovingian patrons, he records that the Church had a powerful influence on his early education;[8] a pilgrimage to give thanks to St Martin was one of his reasons for coming to Gaul, and he probably arrived with letters of introduction

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Dam 1992 and 1993, *passim.*

[5] See Brennan 1985a; George 1992, 22–34; Godman 1987, 1–37.

[6] See George 1992, 21 n.101.

[7] For possible Ravennan influence see Brennan 1985a, 53; George 1992, 43.

[8] Venantius Fortunatus, *Vita Martini* 4.658–62.

from bishops of North Italy to their Gallic counterparts.[9] Christian and ecclesiastical values, therefore, were as much a part of the formative influences on the poet as the rigours of a traditional rhetorical education.

The Merovingian context

The panegyric of Fortunatus' contemporary at the Byzantine court, Corippus, was declaimed in a rich and complex setting, where the nuances of ceremonial sent subtly coded political messages, and a panegyrist must reflect these complexities as well as the ornate physical setting of a declamation with equally baroque verbal splendours.[10] In the Merovingian context, the *Romanitas* of the Latin literary tradition and the lustre it shed by association on an individual's status and attainment, was valued highly as a vital aspect of their cultural pedigree by Gallo-Romans, and equally sought by the Franks as part of the role to which they aspired as heirs to the Romans in Gaul.[11] But the Merovingian court, by contrast with Byzantium, was a simpler and more basic setting for a panegyrist. Gregory of Tours, however, mentions incidentally the two-stage ceremonial arrival (*adventus*) of King Guntram.[12] Fortunatus' poetry suggests that such formal occasions of welcome did indeed play a part in the relationship between a king and his people, especially at times of tension, and that the ceremonial had, as elsewhere,[13] now been widely adopted by the Church also, as bishops needed to validate their election and create the same recognized political base in a community as that on which a secular authority depended in other circumstances. But the poet's panegyrics were also employed for the praise and public recognition of lesser secular figures—the magnates of the kingdom, as they celebrated the attainment of high office or were welcomed as emissaries of the ruler into a city.

Such evidence suggests that, though panegyric was not the sophisticated and complex medium of political communication

[9] See Brennan 1985a, 55–8; George 1992, 24–7.
[10] See Averil Cameron 1981, ch. 6.
[11] See n.2.
[12] Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum* 8.1.
[13] See Brown 1976; van Dam 1992, 125.

that it was in Byzantium, it still played an important role in public life in Gaul, both secular and ecclesiastical, and that it still functioned as a medium for communication and negotiation between rulers and people.

Poems of the early years

The earliest panegyric is *Poem* 6.1a, addressed to Sigibert and Brunhild shortly after their marriage in AD 566. Both the elaborate epithalamium (*Poem* 6.1)[14] and this poem[15] can be best read as splendid set pieces, deploying the full panoply of the rhetorical tradition to celebrate the young Merovingian king and his Visigothic bride, and, in so doing, impressing upon the king and his court that they were immensely favoured by the presence of a Latin rhetorician, able to honour their ceremonial with verse which placed them firmly in the kind of cultural tradition to which they would wish to become accustomed.

The structuring of the formal topics and the imagery place this poem firmly in the tradition of the *basilikos logos*, the 'acclaim of kings'. The poem starts with a dramatic apostrophe of Sigibert as conqueror, with reference to a recent victory over the Saxons and Thuringians (7–18). Many of the traditional motifs of panegyric are packed within the mere forty-two lines. Invocation of universal acclaim (*consensus universorum*), linked with the sun imagery associated with the ceremonial presentation of rulers,[16] demonstrates the legitimacy of the king's rule (1–2); a disclaimer of modesty for the poet (3–4) and visual imagery in a reference to a winged Victory[17] (9–10) are followed by a catalogue of Sigibert's virtues in war and in peace which culminates in the religious dimension of acclaim of the king as the salvation of his people. The poem draws out the three elements essential to Merovingian kingship—the Germanic warrior, the legitimate and acknowledged Roman ruler, and the Christian defender of his people. The acclaim of Brunhild as Sigibert's honoured and recently converted Catholic consort[18]

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[14] For discussion see George 1992, 153–6; Roberts 1989.

[15] For discussion of the panegyric see George 1992, 40–3.

[16] For light imagery see MacCormack 20, 36, 45, 50.

[17] See George 1992, 40–1 for a possible allusion to Sigibert's coinage.

[18] For Brunhild's marriage and conversion see Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum* 4.27. See also George 1992, 153–61; Nelson 1973; Wood 1994, *passim*.

(29–40) recognizes Sigibert's dynastic ambitions, carefully aligned with church orthodoxy. Fortunatus skilfully draws the image of a powerful and ambitious young king, seeking to unite secular and ecclesiastical power in his support, an image also reflected in Gregory's account.[19]

In addition to other more informal eulogies and occasional poems of this period to various magnates and officials of the court, there are also two more formal panegyrics: *Poem* 7.7 to Duke Lupus, and *Poem* 7.16, to Condan, the court *domesticus*,[20] which show the poet using the genre to eulogize important contacts, but also indirectly to praise and flatter their royal master. The distinctive features of these two panegyrics—indeed, of the three panegyrics of Sigibert's court—suggest strongly a mastery and purposefulness in the poet's use of the genre, and reflect particular relationships and dialogue.

In *Poem* 7.7, Fortunatus addressed a panegyric to Lupus, Duke of Champagne, also recently arrived (67), to congratulate him on his recent elevation to that post.[21] The poem, probably declaimed at some formal celebration, eulogizes the honours given to Lupus by the king; the praise given to his achievements on the field of battle and as a diplomat reflects the reasons for his appointment. The traditional sequence of topics gives the framework to the eulogy. The comparison of Lupus' power with that of the Roman consuls (5), the catalogue of his Roman virtues (7–19), and the invocation of the spirit of ancient Rome—whose heroes Lupus surpasses—are specially appropriate compliments from an (Italian) Roman to a (Gallo-) Roman (45–6). The final section, with appropriate imagery of light and brilliance, celebrates the grace Lupus' presence brings to the court (65ff.).

This is far from a stock eulogy. The office of duke was not hereditary; it was a high-profile and high-risk military appointment. Fortunatus targets his praise precisely on the reasons for the appointment, a greater compliment than turning out the conventional details about ancestry and upbringing. Furthermore, there are personal and distinctive aspects in the picture Fortunatus draws

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19 Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum* 4.27.

20 For the adminstrative role of the *domesticus* see Carlot 1903; Jones 602–3.

21 For Lupus see Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum* 4.46, 6.4, 9.11, 9.13; Venantius Fortunatus, *Poems* 7.7–9. For poems to Lupus see George 1992, 79–82, 132–6; Godman 1987, 19–20. For the office of duke see Lewis 1976.

of the duke. The duke's ability to restore low spirits is by no means a routine attribute (9–10); but it is one which Fortunatus still refers to with gratitude ten years later (7.8.31ff.). Finally, the evocative quality of graciousness (*dulcedo*) attributed to him summons up the complex and elegant images of early imperial poetry,[22] reflecting also in its suggestion of eloquence and sustenance the literary relationship between poet and patron.

The panegyric to Sigibert is apt and impressive; this to Lupus is richer in its sense of a shared inheritance and interests. It significantly looks beyond the duke to praise the ruler whose wisdom has elevated Lupus and whose greatness is reflected in his servant's qualities; praise of the man is at the same time praise of his master. But there is the impression of a personal rapport, which is confirmed by the fact that the poet is still in personal contact with Duke Lupus some ten years later.[23]

The third panegyric for the court at Metz is different again. It is addressed to Condan,[24] who is not known from any other source, and pays tribute to his distinguished service at five Merovingian courts, a career profile which marks him as a man of remarkably wide experience and survival skills.

The poem runs through the full array of panegyric topics, detailing his achievements in peace and in war, reversing the subjects of family and lineage to hail Condan as the founder of his family's fortunes (7–14). As in the eulogy to Lupus, the king is firmly in the line of vision, Condan's latest appointment being hailed as by far the most glorious. This panegyric is in strong contrast to the first two, being couched in straightforward, almost pedestrian terms, with virtually no literary or visual evocation, and minimal reference to personal characteristics or charisma. Fortunatus lets Condan's career speak for itself, reflecting the pride of a self-made man, the reversal of the panegyric topic of ancestry doubling the compliment on his career.

Political comment or mediation is not on the agenda in these poems. The panegyric to Sigibert is part of a well-orchestrated event, designed to bring magnates together from all corners of the kingdom, and to acclaim the king's rule and his dynastic alliance

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22 See Godman 1987, 14–21.
23 Venantius Fortunatus, *Poems* 7.8 and 9.
24 For discussion see George 1992, 82–3.

with the Visigoths.[25] The other poems celebrate personal achievement, with the king's supreme authority carefully acknowledged. In each poem, Fortunatus reflects sensitively the personality and the aspirations of the recipient, skilfully shaping the genre to match the occasion. But the poet's prime objective is to ensure his own entrée to circles of patronage at the court.[26]

A more politically assertive agenda can be seen in the panegyric delivered in the following year to Charibert, *Poem* 6.2. After the death of Lothar in 561, his kingdom had been divided between his four sons, Charibert, Sigibert, Guntram and Chilperic. Charibert had received the city of Paris as his capital in this settlement[27] and recalled Ultrogotha, the widow of his uncle, Childebert I, who had been exiled with her daughters by Lothar.[28]

The immediate context of the poem is a sharp rift between Charibert and the Church. Bishop Germanus of Paris had recently excommunicated the king for his polygamous marriages to Merofled and to Marcovefa, a runaway nun. Indeed, when the king's refusal to give Marcovefa up was followed by her sudden death, and shortly afterwards by that of the king himself, the Church saw this as the judgement of heaven.[29] It was in the midst of this dispute, in the last few months of the king's life in late 567 or early 568, that Fortunatus delivered this panegyric.[30]

The poem begins with a fanfare in honour of the king and the glorious occasion (1–8). It calls for universal acclaim of Charibert (5), identifying the two racial groups, Gallo-Romans and Franks, who applaud the king each in their native tongue (7),[31] and celebrating the return of the blessings of Childebert's reign with the recall of the exiled widow, Ultrogotha, and her daughters (13–26). The poem continues with the traditional sequence of topics, praising Charibert's lineage and early years (41–8), and his virtues as a man of peace, rather than war. The sense of peace and hope is strengthened by Messianic imagery derived from Virgil's fourth

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25 See Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum* 4.27.

26 However, see the insecurity suggested by *Poems* 6. 8, 9 and 10, 7.11 and 12.

27 Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum* 4.22.

28 Ibid. 4.20.

29 Ibid. 4.26.

30 For the dating see George 1992, 29, 44.

31 Cf. a similar grouping of subjects in Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum* 8.1.

Eclogue.[32] Charibert has the virtues of a Roman statesman (61–96), chief among them his sense of duty, inherited from his uncle, Childebert; this guarantees his protection for the people of Paris (12), and for Childebert's widow and daughters (21–6, 57–8). By this God guides the king, and he in turn guides his people (111–14). A rhetorical comparison with biblical rulers and Roman exemplars (77–84) enhances the tribute; and the unifying force of Charibert's eloquence in his own native tongue and in Latin (97–100) is emphasized by calling him 'Sicamber', in reference to the legendary origin of the Franks,[33] as distinct from 'we Romans'. The panegyric ends traditionally with a baroque tableau of Charibert wreathed in glory, the light imagery and the appeal for the acclaim of his people reinforcing his royal status.

This is a panegyric with clear purpose, delivered at a formal *adventus* ceremony, its repeated appeal for supportive acclaim suggesting strongly the tensions of the occasion. Stylistically it is stripped to the functional skeleton of the genre. But Fortunatus has retained the traditional pattern of topics to give the poem coherence and purpose, strengthening its dramatic force and the flow of argument through the topics by evocative and appropriate verbal echoes and visual motifs. In the context, Fortunatus' emphasis on the king's peaceable virtues, on his statesmanship, on his inheritance of Childebert's love of the Church[34] and his protection of Childebert's widow, a devout and saintly woman,[35] offers reassurance to the people and the clergy about the king. At the same time, it holds up to the king an ideal of kingship, especially in his relationship to the Church,[36] and urges on him the commitment to duty and to unity which he must have to sustain their support.

About this time[37] Fortunatus addressed two panegyrics to bishops in the West, Leontius of Bordeaux and Felix of Nantes. The longer and more elaborate, *Poem* 1.15, is to Leontius, a Gallo-Roman of

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[32] Virgil, *Eclogue* 4.7. See Benko 1980; for other references see George 1992, 45 n.50.

[33] See Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum* 2.31: James 1991, 235–43; Wood 1994, 33–8.

[34] See Laporte 1953.

[35] See *Vita S. Balthildis* 18 (505–6 ed. Krusch).

[36] For this 'mirror of princes' technique see Burdeau 1964; Born 1934; Collins 1983.

[37] Leontius died in 573; for the date of the poems to Felix see George 1992, 115.

distinguished ancestry,[38] married to an aristocratic wife, Placidina, who counted an emperor as well as Sidonius Apollinaris among her forebears.[39] The bishop had had an impressive military career in his youth,[40] replacing his father in the bishopric of Bordeaux on the latter's death in 549.[41] Despite losing a bitter dispute with Charibert in the mid 560s,[42] he continued to have great ambitions for his see, engaging in extensive church-building projects with his wife's support[43] and renovating the country villas on his estates[44] in grand style.

The panegyric acclaims the grand Roman aristocrat, setting out in the full traditional pattern the splendour of his family, his virtues and his achievements. His past influence in royal circles is exceeded by his present supreme position, in which 'now you rule with the authority of the Church' (31) as metropolitan bishop (67–70). Appropriate modifications are made to reflect such rank. His outstanding military record is lauded separately from his ecclesiastical achievements, and these are listed in elaborate detail, attracting a traditional rhetorical comparison (73–6) and an echo of Claudian.[45] A short passage pays tribute to Placidina's virtues and lineage (93–110),[46] and the poem ends with a prayer for God's blessing.

The rule of a bishop transcends mere kingly power because of the eternal merits of the office.[47] The topics and the imagery of royal panegyric reflect this grandeur and status, the pervasive light imagery conveying the regal splendour of the bishop, recalling the glory of his dazzling new buildings, and resolving into the light of Christ, which Leontius, by his building, brings to his

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38 See George 1992, 70–4, 108–13; Griffe 1963; de Maillé 1959, 90ff.

39 See Stroheker 1944, Appendix on 'Stammbaume spätrömischer Senatorengeschlechter in Gallien', no. 1.

40 Venantius Fortunatus, *Poems* 1.15.9–10, 4.10.11.

41 See George 1992, 70 n.30.

42 Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum* 4.26.

43 See Venantius Fortunatus, *Poems* 1.6.21–2, 1.12.13–14, 1.14, 1.15.109–10. For their buildings see Vieillard-Troiekouroff 1976, 54–9, 280–3; Mâle 1950, 164–7.

44 Venantius Fortunatus, *Poems* 1.18–20. For discussion see George 1992, 108–13.

45 Line 47: cf. Claudian, *In Eutrop.* 1.408.

46 The early rhetorical handbooks make praise of a queen an optional topic (Menander Rhetor 376.9–13), though it is one which is rarely taken up: e.g. Claudian, *Laus Serenae*, Corippus, *In laud. Iust. min.* 2.47–84 and 310–11, etc., and see Tougher in this volume.

47 For the power of a Merovingian bishop see Brennan 1983, 222–39.

people (1, 23–34, 57–8, 95). There is no sense of mediation or direct appeal to his people, who merely applaud his great deeds. This poem is a straight eulogy, which sets a formal literary seal of approval upon Leontius' achievements, without any complexities of reference or social dynamics. The only external intent can be to assert his strength and authority against that of the distant king.

There is a very similar tone to the panegyric to Bishop Felix of Nantes, *Poem* 3.8. Felix, like Leontius, was a Gallo-Roman of ancient and aristocratic Aquitainian family, who had peaceful literary interests, but led an active life as a bishop, defending his people against the threats of the Bretons and the invading Saxons, negotiating, fighting or converting as required.[48] Fortunatus attended the dedication ceremony in 567/8[49] of the new cathedral he built in Nantes, and the festive occasion which this poem celebrates was in all likelihood the anniversary of Felix's consecration as bishop, his *natalicium*.[50]

As he did in the panegyric to Leontius, Fortunatus here celebrates Felix's splendour with the light imagery of royal panegyric (3–10), imagery which is appropriately replete with biblical and ecclesiastical allusions. He elaborates the familiar sequence of topics, including his learning, eloquence, and justice. Note is made of his *Romanitas*, for in Felix Rome lives anew (20); and, like Leontius, he has worldly greatness but also rules the Church with greater hopes of everlasting reward (26).

Fortunatus addresses Leontius' wife, Placidina, directly. She appears to have acquiesced happily in her husband's obedience to the ruling of the Church which urged the separation of man and wife among the higher clergy, and their dedication to a celibate life, for which Fortunatus congratulated them.[51] Felix's wife was less amenable, and could only suspect that the bishop was refusing to sleep with her because he was sleeping with someone else.

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[48] See Duchesne 1907–15, 2, 366; George 1992, 77–9: Mâle 1950, 167; McDermott 1975; Stroheker 1944, no. 148. For his literary interests see Venantius Fortunatus, *Poem* 3.4.

[49] For the date see Mâle 1950, 167; for the building see Vieillard-Troiekouroff 1976, no. 172.

[50] See Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum* 5.20 for a similar occasion. For such liturgical commemoration see Brennan 1983, 74. For discussion see George 1992, 77–9.

[51] See *Conc. Tur.* (567), canon 13 (14) (125 ed. Maasen); Brennan 1985b. For the congratulations see Venantius Fortunatus, *Poem* 1.15.93–4.

Gregory records her discomfiture with satisfaction;[52] and here Fortunatus, neatly seizing the opportunity afforded by the topic of marriage, congratulates the bishop on his celibacy and spiritual union with his Church, and his care for the Church's people (27–38). The bishop protects his people against the Bretons, like a shepherd fighting the wolves off his flock—no doubt an apt simile (39–42); he is generous and charitable to the needy, for which he will receive his due reward (43–8). The poem ends with a prayer for him.

The formality of structure and topics, as with the panegyric to Leontius, offers appropriate homage to an aristocratic Gallo-Roman, whose power and autonomy, on the fringes of the Merovingian kingdom, are such that he can well be represented as ruling, in both a secular and a spiritual sense.[53]

These five poems date from the very early years of Fortunatus' life in Gaul, and can well be seen as part of the pattern of spectacular set pieces he wrote and declaimed in his endeavours to find patronage in court and ecclesiastical circles.[54] Even within these, however, there is a variety in the style and deployment of topics and motifs from the formal to the informal, from the elaborate to the starkly plain, from simple eulogy to persuasive mediation, which reveals the poet attending sensitively to each individual and to each occasion.

Moreover, in the patrons addressed and in the values underlying the panegyrics, the Church is as much a part of the pattern of power as are the kings and the secular magnates; and so churchmen are as naturally players in the drama of panegyric, either as subjects (Felix or Leontius) or as one party in a negotiation, like Bishop Germanus and his clergy in the panegyric to Charibert. The panegyric to Sigibert contains a strong strand of Christian values and ideals; that to Charibert firmly advises the king to behave in a God- and Church-fearing way; the Church's values in celibacy are lauded both in the panegyric to Sigibert and that to Felix; the Church's power over and responsibilities for individuals and communities are firmly underlined.

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[52] Gregory of Tours, *Liber in Gloria Confessorum* 77.

[53] Cf. n.47.

[54] For discussion of other poems to Leontius and Felix see George 1992, 108–23.

Poems of the middle years

By the early 570s Fortunatus was firmly established in Poitiers, where he was to live for the rest of his life, in association with the ex-queen Radegund and her community,[55] and with Gregory of Tours.[56] From this time onwards a more clear-cut purpose can be seen behind his use of this genre.

The accession address to Gregory (*Poem* 5.3) is in strong contrast to the panegyrics to Leontius and to Felix. The very title, *Ad ciues Turonicos de Gregorio episcopo* (*'To the citizens of Tours about Bishop Gregory*') signals the difference. This is not a poem of formal eulogy and congratulation to a powerful and well-established prince of the Church. Like the address to Charibert, this is an example of panegyric as mediation, as the poet, like so many orators in the past, sought to introduce a new ruler to his people and to establish their relationship.

Gregory, like the bishops of Bordeaux and Nantes, came from a long and illustrious line of Gallo-Roman aristocrats.[57] He had been brought up by Bishop Avitus of Clermont-Ferrand, and was appointed to Tours with the approval of Sigibert and Brunhild, consecrated by Bishop Igidius of Rheims, and entered Tours as its new bishop on 28 August 573.[58] There was considerable tension between secular and ecclesiastical authorities in that city, both at the time of Gregory's appointment and later. These tensions provided the context both for this panegyric, and for the later one of 581, addressed to King Chilperic in defence of Gregory.[59]

At the time of Gregory's appointment, the city was part of the lands inherited by Sigibert on Charibert's death, but was captured by Theudebert, Chilperic's son, shortly afterwards.[60] The *consensus* of his people was of very real relevance to the security of a bishop's tenure of office at any time, and particularly in times of insecurity.[61] The arrival of Gregory, an outsider from the Auvergne, called for all the support an *aduentus* ceremony could provide.

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55 For Radegund see n.3.
56 For Gregory see n.4.
57 See Stroheker 1944, no. 183; Wood 1983, 38–40.
58 Venantius Fortunatus, *Poem* 5.3.11–16.
59 See George 1992, 48–9, 75: van Dam 1993, 68–71.
60 Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum* 4.4.7 and 50.
61 See n.13.

The summons to the people is immediate and urgent—*plaudite* —, heralding the bishop's arrival and calling on every sector of the community to acclaim him (1–4). Fortunatus then introduces Gregory to his people with a play on his name—'Gregory by name, shepherd of the city's flock (*grex*)' (10)—an image which sets the tone for the characterization of the bishop throughout the poem.

In strong contrast to the panegyric to Leontius, Fortunatus makes no mention in the next section of Gregory's illustrious family, or even of their long tradition of past service to the Church,[62] setting out, instead of any pedigree, the spiritual and ecclesiastical sponsors, who guarantee his worth and intentions (11–16). Rather than catalogue past achievements, which might only serve to emphasize that his roots lay elsewhere, Fortunatus instead holds out a vision of the loving care and protection the new bishop will provide for his people, elaborating it with appropriate biblical imagery. The poem ends with a tableau of saints and apostles clustering around, and a final prayer of blessing.

Thus the persuasive force of the poem is prospective, not retrospective, couched in simple, accessible terms. The message of reassurance, so important at a time of uncertainty, is vitalized by rich and familiar imagery.[63] The freshness of hope and of new beginnings, offered to the people as a positive counterbalance to change and fear of the future, is in stark contrast to the elaborate praise offered to Leontius and Felix, powerfully entrenched in well-established positions.

The main focus of Fortunatus' work at this period, however, was on behalf of Radegund and her community. He composed two fine *gratiarum actiones* ('thanksgiving tributes') in the late 560s; the one to the Emperor Justin and the Empress Sophia in Byzantium, in thanks for the precious gift of a fragment of the Holy Cross for the community, the second to Bishop Martin of Braga, for his support and advice to the nuns in their adoption of the *Rule* of Caesarius for their community.

Wishing to acquire prestigious relics as a focal point for her community, Radegund sent envoys to Byzantium, with Sigibert's

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[62] See n.4.

[63] Familar both from Bible stories, but also from visual arts: see Mâle 1950, 189, 200, 241; Salin 1949–59 IV chs. 34–6.

backing,[64] and with the reinforcement of three poems by Fortunatus.[65] The embassy was successful, returning with a fragment of the True Cross set in a reliquary, together with other relics of the apostles and martyrs, and a splendid gospel book.[66] Maroveus, Bishop of Poitiers, refused to officiate at the reception of the relics, so the ceremony was performed, at Sigibert's request, by Bishop Eufronius of Tours.[67] It was for this occasion that Fortunatus, in all probability, wrote his two great hymns to the Cross,[68] and it was also at this time that he sent *Appendix* 2, a poem of thanks on Radegund's behalf, to Justin and Sophia.[69]

As was appropriate for acknowledgement of the gift of such a precious relic, Fortunatus' emphasis in the poem is on the wider religious and ecclesiastical context. On his accession in 565, Justin II had sought to heal the breaches effected in the Church by the question of the Three Chapters (which centred round the issue of orthodoxy on the subject of the three Persons of the Trinity), recalling exiled bishops and restoring the rights of those penalized in the bitter controversy.[70] Fortunatus acclaims this healing action by hailing the emperor and empress as the champions of Chalcedonian orthodoxy, addressing his words not to them directly, indeed, but to the three Persons of the Trinity. The introductory ten lines proclaim the credal propositions of the Council of Chalcedon; and each of the two sections of the poem, the one directed to Justin (11–50) and the second directed mainly to Sophia (51ff.), are structured round the significant triple repetition of a couplet magnifying the Triune God (1–2, 11–12, 21–2, 49–50, 61–2, 71–2).

Fortunatus acclaims Justin as an adherent of the true faith of the Roman world, explicitly deriving the validity of his rule from his obedience to the doctrine of the Church of Peter in Rome, and emphasizing this point by the play on words in the second line of the refrain couplet: 'You who in Your Justice grant Justin as lord in the world'. He praises the emperor's restoration of the authority of Chalcedon, and his mercy in restoring exiles and releasing prisoners (23–44).

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64 Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum* 9.40.
65 Venantius Fortunatus, *Poem* 8.1, *Appendix* 1 and 3.
66 See Conway 1923.
67 Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum* 9.40.
68 See Szöverffy 1966, 107–22.
69 Baudonivia, *De uita S. Radegundis* 2.17 for the possible occasion.
70 See Herrin 1987, 119–25.

The second section, introduced by the Trinitarian refrain, praises Sophia for her gift of the relic, through which she strengthens the faith of the West, and likens the couple to Constantine and his mother Helena, an apt comparison given Constantine's role in establishing the Church, and Helena's discovery of the True Cross (51–70). The acclaim given to the emperor and empress (23–32, 39–46, 75–84), is world-wide, from the rising to the setting of the sun, the extent of the ecclesiastical discord which Justin has healed. The final section, again heralded by the refrain, hails the power of the Cross, portraying Radegund prostrate in adoration and offering prayers for the imperial couple.

Fortunatus' three earlier poems had paved the way for the request for the relic; this tribute deploys the resources of formal rhetoric imaginatively and purposefully, taking as its focus the God who had hung on the Cross, a fragment of which was now in Radegund's keeping, and the Church whose role it was to serve that God in the world, and making no reference to the secular and political aspects of this event.[71]

The second *gratiarum actio, Poem* 5.2, was also written on Radegund's behalf, to the bishop of Braga, Martin, who had close links with Gregory and Tours,[72] and advised Radegund on the adoption of the *Rule* of St Caesarius of Arles for her community.[73] Martin, a Pannonian by birth and a well-educated man, founded the monastery at Dumium in Galicia, converting king and people to Catholicism, before becoming archbishop of Braga, the capital of the Suevian kings, from 556 to his death in 579.[74]

The imagery of light pervades this poem, from the dramatic picture in the first lines of the rays of gospel truth spreading out from Rome, the focus of the orthodoxy Martin had established. This light is the *lumen apostolicum,* the apostolic light of the Trinitarian faith which Martin had defended against the heresy of Arianism (1); it is also the *lux sementiua* (3), the life-giving light which fosters the growth of this faith.

In an apostrophe to Galicia, which acts as a patterning framework for the eulogy (17–18, 43–4), as the repeated couplet does in

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71 Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum* 4.40. See Averil Cameron 1981, ch. 10, 'The early religious policies of Justin II'; Goffart 1957, 77; Stein 1919, 34 n.18.

72 Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum* 5.37.

73 Venantius Fortunatus, *Poem* 5.1, 5.2.67–70.

74 See *Life of Martin* 1–8 (ed. Barlow); Thompson 1980.

Appendix 2, Fortunatus hails Martin as a true successor to the apostles, summoning Galicia in panegyric fashion to acclaim his work. The poet then catalogues the bishop's life and achievements (21–58), developing the earlier imagery of fertility and life-giving growth with echoes of biblical parables of seeds and growth, and summing up his virtues in imagery of the sheep and the shepherd, and the parable of the talents.[75] The poem ends with a commendation of the poet and of Radegund and Agnes, and reference to their adoption of the *Rule* of Caesarius.

Like the previous *gratiarum actio*, this poem too has a complex and formal structure, rich in the resonance of evocative names and allusions, dignified with rhetorical motifs and images. But the imagery here derives appropriately from the Bible and the Church, and the introductory tableau is of apostles and martyrs, their ever-living presence a backcloth to his achievement, rather than the pedigree of secular ancestors, receding ever further from the present.

These poems were in praise of notable achievements. The panegyric declaimed to King Chilperic and his assembled clergy at the Synod of Berny-Rivière in 580, *Poem* 9.1, addressed a far more threatening situation. Tension had built between Gregory as bishop of Tours and the count of Tours, Leudast, culminating in a formal charge of treason being laid by the bishop of Bordeaux against Gregory, that the latter had spread malicious slander against the queen, Fredegund. This charge exploited hostilities and divisions between the king and the bishops, which had already seen the flawed trial and exile of Bishop Praetextatus of Rouen.[76] The situation was complex. The bishops needed to have their authority and security reasserted in relation to royal power; Gregory needed acquittal and the assurance that he would not be further harried; the king needed to distance himself from this disastrous charge against Gregory,[77] and to be assured of the loyalty of the Church, without loss of face. Fortunatus' panegyric sought to construct a formula of reconciliation between the king and his bishops, removing the threat from Gregory, and seeking to

[75] For detailed discussion of this poem see George 1992, 67–9.

[76] See George 1992, 48–9: van Dam 1993, 68–71.

[77] There was a risk of excommunication: see Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum* 5.49.

influence Chilperic, as he had Charibert, by offering an ideal of kingly behaviour.[78]

The poem is long, formal, and the most complex of all the panegyrics. The poet first acknowledges the audience of bishops at the synod, then turns to the king to hail him with a classical flourish[79] and to summon world-wide acclaim for his rule. Using the conventional sequence of topics as a structure, the poet then picks his way with consummate skill and ingenuity through the events of a life of bloodshed and treachery, to offer a heavily coded and morally acceptable version of Chilperic's reign to date.[80] The message is that he has survived only through the grace of God and the support of his bishops, that bygones must be bygones, and that the pattern of kingly qualities which is being delineated—love and care for his people, piety and godly rule, due respect for the Church—should apply in the future, however sketchily it applied in the past. The eulogy of Fredegund (115–26) which praises her as a loyal and virtuous wife—a significant characterization in circumstances where her honour was at issue—likewise suggests that she, like her husband, should not be tempted to act less than honourably. The poem ends with a tableau of Chilperic and his family, linking the king's rule with that of Christ, creating a Church-centred image of the pious and orthodox monarch, surrounded by his bishops, protecting his people mercifully, and standing strong against heresy. A disclaimer of modesty concludes the poem neatly with an echo of the first lines.

Throughout, the motifs shape and enhance the panegyric's message. Light imagery flatters the king and even Fredegund with its regal overtones; the dramatic call for world-wide acclaim (13–22) acknowledges or even warns of the king's need, but flatters with its grandeur; the king's very name and the circumstances of his early years are presented as portents of a notable reign (29–32 and 39–40); the architectural symbolism of defence speaks in hope of the king's recognition of his people's need (79–84); and the modesty disclaimers at beginning and end include Fortunatus duly as one of the actors in this drama.

The poet is here making one of his most active and prescriptive

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[78] See n.36. The poem has been construed as opportunistic betrayal of Gregory by Fortunatus: for discussion of this see George 1992, 56–7.

[79] Line 5: cf. Horace, *Odes* 1.1.1.

[80] For detailed analysis see George 1992, 48–57.

contributions to a complex political situation, from a clear standpoint of defence of Gregory and of the interests and values of the Church. In essence, he suggests a formula for *rapprochement*, apparently successfully. In the event, Leudast became a convenient scapegoat, and Gregory cleared himself of the allegation by a sworn statement of his innocence, and was not further harassed.[81]

The approach is far tougher and more positive than that to Charibert. The ideal of a king is in sharper focus, and his relationship with Christ and his Church more explicit; as Christ rules all creation, so the king rules the *regnum Christianum* (Christian kingdom); the bishops support the king's authority, as he in turn is loyal to the Church. Far from being a piece of turncoat flattery, this poem reveals Fortunatus taking a decisive and even dangerous stand in defence of Gregory, against a king who was far from likely to accept criticism without retaliating.[82]

Later poems

By November 587, a major period of instability came to an end with the signing of the Treaty of Andelot.[83] The relationship between King Guntram, the final survivor of his generation, and Childebert, Sigibert and Brunhild's son, was firmly delineated, with major causes of disagreement settled.[84] Loyalties and patterns of allegiance, disrupted by years of royal feuding, began to resettle. From the point of view of Gregory, Radegund and Fortunatus, Poitiers and Tours were now confirmed as part of the kingdom of Childebert, and it was the relationship with Brunhild and her son which determined their political fortunes.

Almost immediately after the signing of the treaty, Fortunatus addressed several poems to the queen and her son—*Poems* 10.7, 8 and 9, and *Appendix* 5 and 6. They are all in their several ways poems in praise of the royal pair and arguments for the interests of Tours and Poitiers. *Poem* 10.8 is a formal, though short, panegyric,[85] some thirty lines long.

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[81] Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum* 5.49.
[82] See n.78.
[83] Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum* 9.11 and 20.
[84] See Wood 1994, 88–101.
[85] On the point of whether the poem was declaimed or sent as a letter see George 1992, 58 n.94.

The introduction, the modesty disclaimer (1–2, 27–8), the imagery of light, growth, and fruitfulness, combine to set this poem firmly in the rhetorical tradition. But the familiar sequence of topics of virtues and achievements is absent; and there is an informality and directness in the message, spoken explicitly on behalf of the people, for whom the poet is spokesman (3–4 and 13). The impression is of an outburst of delighted acclaim, ending with a tableau of happy serenity, posed as though it would never end, with the people gazing up at their rulers in respectful gratitude.

Like the very first panegyric to Sigibert and Brunhild, this poem can be seen as offering simple messages of homage and praise; the earlier poem was on the poet's behalf, however, whilst in this later poem, together with the others written at the same time, Fortunatus is speaking for the interests of that distant part of their kingdom, the Touraine.

Three of the last of Fortunatus' poems also have this agenda of bridge-building for Tours and Poitiers: *Poems* 10.16, 17, and 19. These are not long nor elaborately structured, but they come in a cluster of poems within a changed political context, and contribute to the totality of the picture of Fortunatus' use of the rhetorical tradition to influence a political agenda.

It is likely that they are to be dated to the period immediately after the death of Guntram in 593, when the terms of the Treaty of Andelot came into effect, and when Childebert was virtually the sole Merovingian ruler of his generation.[86] *Poem* 10.16 congratulates Sigivald on his promotion to the post of count, reminding him of his early contact with the poet, when the courtier was detailed by Sigibert to look after Fortunatus on his arrival at court in 567. *Poem* 10.17 is an elaborate eulogy of the count, as he goes to give alms to the poor at the threshold of the cathedral of Tours on behalf of the king. The poet presents the count and his master to Christ for recognition of their charity, and urges heavenly virtue, with its due reward, upon them. As in *Poem* 10.16, the king is as much the subject of the poem as is his count; the poet's message, as in the panegyrics to Charibert and to Chilperic, is that a proper regard for the will of Christ, mediated by his servant, Martin, whose cult centre this is, will ensure that the king's reign is blessed.

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[86] J.W. George, 'Gregory of Tours and Venantius Fortunatus: complementary voices?'; paper delivered at the 1996 International Medieval Congress in Leeds.

Conclusion

The very number and variety of Fortunatus' panegyrics show how valuable a tool this genre was to a poet with a sound rhetorical training and an active engagement with the turbulent politics of Merovingian Gaul. As part of the glorious Latin literary tradition, panegyric gave the poet a prestigious public role, which he could then use to fight his own, or another's corner. Each poem, on analysis, presents a particular response—and in many cases, demonstrably a complex and sophisticated one—to a particular context. As with his other poems, looking at the total range of these works, one can see the poet deploying the full panoply of the genre and adapting it deftly to each person and circumstance. This is as true of the degree of formality and completeness of structure, the use of motifs and traditional imagery, as it is of the involvement of other players in the drama or the evocation of visual echoes.

At times, he used the genre to establish a personal relationship, or to build political bridges. In a highly charged political context, he grappled directly with the issues, addressing the whole situation each time by drawing in the relevant players in the drama and their concerns—Ultrogotha and her daughters, and the racially divided citizens of Paris, in the address to Charibert, for example, or the malevolent background presence of Fredegund in that to Chilperic.

But the medium was not the only message. A consistent moral stance is evident in his panegyrics over the years, over and above praise of the conventional Christian virtues; the need for integration and unity between the two races; a vision of kingship which sets the king in harmony with, if not in moral subordination to, the Church and its bishops; and a vision of the bishops' role which acknowledges their very real secular, as well as spiritual, power.

Fortunatus' panegyric thus integrates a live and changing literary tradition, with its roots in the Roman pagan past, within a value framework set by the Merovingian Church and its interests, and those of Gregory and Radegund in particular. The genre's vitality is demonstrated by the very changes and developments its flexibility allowed the poet in response to his requirements, and its authenticity by its close adherence to the spirit of this long literary tradition. This is no token nod to a prestigious but inert relic of

Roman culture, but a sophisticated, relevant and effective form of political and social interaction.[87]

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CHAPTER TEN

DEFENDER OF THE CROSS: GEORGE OF PISIDIA ON THE EMPEROR HERACLIUS AND HIS DEPUTIES

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I *The poet, his work and its setting*

George of Pisidia is best known as panegyrist of the Emperor Heraclius (AD 610–41). Although of provincial origin,[1] we encounter him only in Constantinople, where he was one of many deacons of St Sophia. The various titles attached to his name in the manuscripts of his poems indicate an administrative career in the service of the Patriarch Sergius: he was at one time patriarchal *referendarius*, responsible for communications with the emperor.[2] This sparse evidence suggests that, like the poets of Agathias' circle half a century earlier, George did not survive by his pen. He had a successful administrative career in an ecclesiastical environment.

Nor was panegyric his only literary interest: poems still awaiting re-edition are often passed over.[3] These works have a strong religious focus: a massive *Hexaemeron* celebrating God's Creation and an introspective piece *On the Vanity of Life*, concerned with the problem of personal sin, are among the most important.[4] There is also a prose encomium on the Persian martyr Anastasius (an elaboration of the saint's martyr Acts),[5] and a poem *Against Severus*,

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1 Perhaps from Antioch in Pisidia (Psellus, *Essay*, 48.100f. Dyck).

2 Pertusi 1960, 11–13. According to the 10th-c. Suda *Lexicon* (I 517 Adler), George rose to the position of *chartophylax*, head of the patriarchal secretariat and keeper of the archives.

3 *PG* 92.1161–1676, 1729–54; Sternbach 1891, 1892. Pertusi published only the first volume of his projected edition of George's work; the remainder is now the subject of a collaborative Austro-Italian project. Dr James Howard-Johnston first directed my own attention to the importance of the poems not included in Pertusi's volume.

4 The *Hexaemeron* has a political framework, but its core celebrates God's cosmos: see Olster 1991, Ludwig 1991, esp. 74, 104–28, Mary Whitby 1995.

5 Ed. with French trans. by Flusin 1992, I 189–259.

promoting Heraclius' moves to counter Monophysitism.[6] In addition a number of brief epigrams survive, again often dealing with religious themes, sacred objects, figures or buildings. All the longer works are addressed to prominent figures, the majority either to Heraclius or Sergius. Even the panegyrics include a prominent religious element, which gives George's poetry a consistent posture, regardless of addressee, analogous to the philosophical persona sustained by Themistius in his panegyrics for successive fourth-century emperors.[7]

George demonstrates considerable classical as well as biblical learning, which may have won him his role as Heraclius' court-poet. The usurping emperor was eager to validate his position by promoting cultural revival in Constantinople. This is elaborately stated in the Dialogue between History and Philosophy with which George's contemporary Theophylact Simocatta prefaced his classicizing history,[8] and is attested by the Constantinopolitan literary productions of the period which survive—not only Theophylact and George, and perhaps an anonymous poem on Heracles,[9] but the less elevated *Paschal Chronicle* and sermons by Theodore Syncellus—as well as others that do not, for example, commentaries by the philosopher and polymath Stephen of Alexandria.[10] The prominence of the Patriarch Sergius in the dedications of many works indicates that the Church too now had an important role in promoting literature, one of many signs that the early seventh century stood at the turning-point between a classical and a mediaeval age.[11]

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[6] *PG* 92.1621–76.

[7] The majority of George's poems (*On Heraclius' Return, Persian Expedition, On the Resurrection, Avar War, Heraclias, Restoration of the Cross*) open with a religious theme. For Themistius see Russell (sec. 8) and Heather in this volume.

[8] Trans. Whitby and Whitby 3–5; cf. Frendo 1988.

[9] B. Knös, 'Ein spätgriechisches Gedicht über die Arbeiten des Herakles', *BZ* 17 (1908) 397–429; M.L. West, *Greek Metre* (Oxford, 1982) 184.

[10] Stephen was brought to Constantinople from Alexandria by Heraclius: see Lermerle 1971, 80f., Wilson 1983, 46f. and esp. Wolska-Comus 1989 (who notes that only two of his many commentaries survive complete, 8f.). For an excellent survey of intellectual activity under Heraclius see Bernhard Bischoff and Michael Lapidge, *Biblical Commentaries from the Canterbury School of Theodore and Hadrian*, Cambridge Studies in Anglo-Saxon England 10 (Cambridge, 1994) 47–64.

[11] An epigram of George (46 Sternbach) commemorates Sergius' establishment of a library, but views differ as to whether or not he presided over or revived a formal teaching institution, e.g. Lemerle 1971, 79, 87; Wilson 1983, 59f.; Wolska-Comus 1989, 16f. For this period as a turning-point see (e.g.)

The political situation of Heraclius' reign required a good panegyrist. Heraclius' propagandists do not exaggerate unduly when they present 'the new Heracles' as the inheritor of Roman disaster.[12] Despite valiant efforts by the Emperor Maurice (AD 582–602), the memory of whose achievements was perpetuated by Theophylact,[13] from the time of Justinian the Roman empire suffered increasing threats and inroads from the Avars and Slavs to the west and the Persians to the east. Phocas' reign (AD 602–10) saw a series of Persian attacks, culminating in their capture of Edessa, Amida and Theodosioupolis in 609. Although the Balkans appear to have been retained, this was an unstable period of bloody purges. The decade following the euphoria of Heraclius' coup in 610 was scarcely better: the Persians continued to invade the Roman empire and a psychological low point for the Romans was the fall of Jerusalem and the capture of the sacred relic of the Holy Cross in 614, an event which caused even the laconic author of the *Paschal Chronicle* to break into uncharacteristic high-flown lament (704f.). But despite initial opposition, economic crisis, continuing dissension among subjects, and moments of despair,[14] Heraclius worked to revive Roman fortunes, and in 622 led his revitalized army in person against the Persians. Although that campaign achieved only a minor victory against an invading force encamped in Pontus,[15] and Heraclius was forced back to the capital to face an Avar threat (AD 623), he subsequently returned to the eastern front in a protracted campaign (AD 624–8) which culminated in victory over Persia, the murder of the Persian king Khusro II in a coup initiated by his son, and the recovery and restoration of the True Cross.[16] Heraclius' restoration of Roman fortunes in the

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Cameron 1979 and 1992, Haldon 1990.

12 E.g. Theoph. Sim. *Hist.* dial. 1–7, George, *Her.'s Return* 33–62.

13 See Michael Whitby 1988.

14 Initial opposition: Kaegi 1973. Economic problems: symptomized by coinage reform and bread riots (*Paschal Chronicle* 706, 711, 715); Nicephorus (ch. 11) records alienation of church plate to pay tribute. Internal dissension: e.g. *Pers. Exp.* 1.112–29 (opposition to Heraclius' personal leadership of campaign); 2.28–31, 163–76 (division among troops); *Avar War* 49–62 (popular dissension); *Her.* 2.34–61 (Heraclius as doctor to divided citizens); 122–32 (opposition to Heraclius' withdrawal to plan Persian campaign). Despair: Heraclius planned to return to Africa when famine and plague afflicted the capital (Nicephorus, ch. 8).

15 Oikonomidès 1976.

16 For an excellent historical narrative of the first three decades of the seventh century see Whittow 1996, 69–82.

620s, not without moments of great crisis like the Avar siege of the capital in his absence (AD 626), is commemorated and celebrated in George's poems; in the 630s he falls silent.[17]

Heraclius' self-conscious cultural revival promoted self-conscious literary elevation: the works of Theophylact and George seek to charm by their literary refinement as much as to inform. Theophylact in any case chose the safe territory of the reign of Maurice (AD 582–602) as his historical theme.[18] The *Paschal Chronicle* retains the low-level style characteristic of its genre, but also the limited perspective of a city chronicle: its coverage of Heraclius' Persian campaigns is fragmentary, full only where it retains verbatim imperial despatches sent to boost the morale of the capital from which the emperor was so long absent.[19] The historical narratives of Theophanes and Nicephorus were produced two centuries later, with consequent problems of remoteness and garbling. Hence George's poetry is the major contemporary Greek testimony to Heraclius' Persian wars. But the reconstruction of history from promotional panegyric is always hazardous, doubly so when literary embellishment and conceit are paramount among the author's concerns.

This paper sets itself the more limited objective of analysing George's image of the emperor, the virtues highlighted and the consistency of the portrait. I quote extensively in order to illustrate his high-flown metaphorical style and technique of repetition with variation, and I consider whether reiteration of particular points may serve the propaganda purpose of countering criticism.[20] Broad examination of George's picture suggests new interpretations of some problematical passages.

The protracted absence of Heraclius from the capital where George was based lends distinctive features.[21] After celebrating the 622 campaign in *On the Persian Expedition*, produced to imperial

[17] The Appendix to this article suggests approximate dates for George's poems and relates them to major historical events.

[18] Frendo (1988) argues that Theophylact carefully highlights episodes which provide positive paradigms for the reign of Heraclius.

[19] *Paschal Chronicle* 727–36.

[20] See secs. IV–VI.

[21] The view that George accompanied Heraclius on campaign rests on tenuous evidence: George writes as if he witnessed military manœuvres at *Pers. Exp.* 2.121–6 and 3.131–6, but in my view this is a panegyrical technique to enhance vividness.

commission (3.374–80),[22] an important element of George's poetic role was to promote morale among the population of the capital and act as intermediary between them and the emperor, a role which is demonstrated in shorter poems which capture the emotional atmosphere of specific moments. *On Bonus* is a plea to Heraclius to return and aid his beleaguered capital at the time of the Avar siege (AD 626), *On the Resurrection* moves from the Resurrection theme to morale-boosting sentiments for the youthful Heraclius Constantine, eldest son of the absent emperor,[23] *On the Restoration of the Cross* celebrates Heraclius' restoration of the Cross to Jerusalem in March 630. Rather than the traditional distinction between 'panegyrical' and 'religious' poems,[24] a broad division can be made between the longer poems with a significant narrative element which are likely to have been commissioned (*Persian Expedition, Avar War, Heraclias, Against Severus*), and these shorter pieces intended to have a more spontaneous character. We have no evidence about the performance of George's works, but it is likely that the poems connected with Heraclius were composed for presentation to the people of Constantinople: shorter pieces may have been declaimed to a mass audience in St Sophia, like Heraclius' dispatches from the front,[25] longer works may have formed part of more formal ceremonial occasions, as did the poems of Paul the Silentiary and Corippus in the mid sixth century.

A further distinctive element of George's panegyric is the range of its addressees. *On Bonus* and *On the Resurrection* address those who, together with Sergius, remained behind to take care of the capital, the patrician and *magister* Bonus and the young Heraclius Constantine. Similarity in manner of address can cause uncertainty as to who exactly is addressed.[26] Close examination of this material may help identify criteria for differentiation. It certainly assists

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[22] Here George confidently offers his poem to Heraclius; contrast *Her.'s Return* 72–5, an appeal to the emperor to accept the poem.

[23] On the political background to *On the Resurrection* see Ludwig 1991, 82f., 92f. Heraclius Constantine was born on 3rd May 612 (*Paschal Chron.* 702).

[24] Established by Pertusi's unfinished edition, but rightly challenged by Olster 1991 and 1994, ch. 3.

[25] *Pasch. Chron.* 727.

[26] This problem also arises with the high-flown Dialogue which introduces Theophylact's *History*: most modern scholars believe that Sergius is addressed (Lemerle 1971, Wilson 1983, Whitby and Whitby 1986, Bischoff and Lapidge (n.10) 56), but the case for Heraclius is still argued (Speck 1986, Frendo 1988).

definiton of the qualities of leadership sought at this period of grave crisis in the history of Constantinople.

II *Emperor with God's aid*

The brief early poem *On Heraclius' Return from Africa* is addressed to Heraclius soon after his expulsion of his predecessor Phocas in 610 and was probably composed to win imperial favour.[27] It presents fundamental characteristics of George's portrait of the emperor which recur in later works. A keynote is George's rejection of feats of bloodshed in favour of Christian virtues: Heraclius' 'all-wise mind' (*Her.'s Return* 6), which he exercises in spiritual exertions and the study of Scripture, is highlighted in the opening lines (4–13). The poem ends with a return to the initial theme of Heraclius' spiritual beauty, which will be transmitted to the hearts of his people (80–5).

The well-established theme of 'emperor with God's aid'[28] is central to George's presentation, and vindicates Heraclius' most bloody enterprises. In this poem, comments on the emperor's piety frame the account of his coup: the latter is introduced by the thought that there is now hope that the State will be saved by God working through Heraclius' pious benefactions (37f.), while Heraclius' return to Constantinople from Africa[29] was undertaken because 'a passion possessed you, on fire for God' (53) and his bloody murder of Phocas is presented as an act of piety like that of the biblical Phineas.[30] Heraclius holds his people as slaves 'through God' (60), and God will assist him again in securing peace (63–9). This early work establishes the important conjunction of Heraclius' piety with his people's salvation:[31] the expulsion of Phocas is

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[27] Cf. n.22. I accept Frendo's defence of an early date (1984, 167–71).

[28] Already in pre-Christian panegyric (e.g. Pliny, *Pan.* 80.4f.) and standard imperial ideology from the 4th c. (Dvornik, 1966, esp. chs. 8, 10–12). The deeds of an emperor appointed by God must necessarily be explained in religious terms.

[29] Heraclius' father, also Heraclius, after a successful military career under Maurice, served as exarch of Africa under Phocas, and initiated the rebellion against him from there: *PLRE* III 584–6.

[30] Numbers 25.6–15: Phineas seized a javelin and killed a prominent Israelite who publicly flaunted his Midianite mistress when the Israelites were afflicted with plague for their sins.

[31] Cf. Dio, *On Kingship* 3.51, and Olster 1994, ch. 2.

an act not of bloodshed but of piety, and offers hope in uncertain times of future salvation, above all through peace.

The *Persian Expedition* was composed against a similar background of limited achievement and considerable uncertainty: Heraclius had returned to Constantinople after his first eastern campaign with a minor victory to his credit,[32] but the might of the Persian empire was merely bruised and the Avars were menacing from the west (*Pers. Exp.* 3.311–40). Not surprisingly the mixture of a bloody task taken on as a pious endeavour and hopes for broader salvation recur. Heraclius' whole enterprise was undertaken as an act of trust in God's superior generalship (*Pers. Exp.* 1.17f., cf. 2.24–7) and God is at his side to support and assist in decision-making (e.g. 1.128–30, 2.73–5, 170–4, 3.338). The Christian setting for the campaign is accentuated by Heraclius' celebration of Easter immediately prior to departure (1.132–5, 154), and by his taking with him a religious image 'not made with hands' (1.139–53), later wielded during an exhortatory speech to inspire the troops with fervour (2.86f.).[33]

War with Persia lent itself to presentation in religious terms as a campaign against the alien practices of Zoroastrianism, a theme to which George gives great prominence, for example in his prologue juxtaposition of an invocation to the Trinity which controls the cosmos with a hostile exposition of Persian rituals (1–34), and later in the speech which Heraclius makes as he wields the icon (2.98–119). A contrast between Heraclius' pleasure in pious music and the Persians' lewd cacophony (2.239–48) provides the setting for Heraclius' first successful manœuvre against the enemy, while even the defeated Persian general finally recognizes the emperor's divine generalship (3.293–304). Heraclius is presented as a saviour figure in the prominence given in the first canto of the poem to his rescue of a foundering ship (1.170–220), an account which culminates in the image of him as imperial helmsman of the 'tillers of life' (227–38) and a prayer that this act of salvation may presage that of 'the whole cosmic vessel' (1.248–52). The poem ends with a great prayer to God to direct and inspire his 'pious under-general'

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[32] n.15.

[33] Probably the Camuliana image, already similarly used for inspirational purposes in campaigns of the late 6th c., Theoph. Sim. 2.3.4–6, 3.1.11f. Theophanes' narrative of the 622 campaign (302.31–306.8) is largely dependent on George's poem.

in the achievement of further victories against foes both physical and spiritual (3.385–427).

The themes of Heraclius' piety and hopes for salvation are dramatically validated in the poems written after the defeat of Persia and death of Khusro. The *Heraclias* provides a good illustration.[34] It opens with an extended celebration of the victory of Christianity over Persian religion (1.1–64) which can be seen as the fulfilment of the prayer which opened the *Persian Expedition*, and the second canto concludes by returning to the religious theme with the idea that Heraclius' burning of a Persian fire-temple was a first-fruits victory-offering to his own God (2.214–28):[35] as with the elimination of Phocas, George characteristically presents violent destruction as a positive act of piety. Heraclius is now unequivocally 'deliverer of the world',[36] and his salvation of it is hailed in an extravaganza of mythological, biblical and historical paradigms, which include Heracles, Noah and Alexander.[37] The importance of his piety in this achievement is not underestimated: in stretching out his hands in prayer he stretched himself up to the clouds and dragged his enemy down to Tartarus, with Christ as his corner-stone (1.182–8), a blend of classical and Christian allusion typical of George. His triumphal entry into Constantinople is represented also as an entry through the gates of the universe, in which he holds on high the protective icon which had accompanied him on the Persian campaign (1.208–18). In a review of the reign in the second canto, Heraclius' elimination of Phocas is presented through the paradigms of Perseus and Heracles, but culminates in describing his reward as 'a chariot of life, which rushes towards paths of immortality' (2.5–34): the pious study of the Scriptures through which George suggested that Heraclius sought to wing his

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[34] *On the Restoration of the Cross* also celebrates Heraclius' pious defeat of Persian religion through the Wood of the Cross and associates him with redemption by reference to the raising of Lazarus (104–11), on whose Feast news of the restoration reached the capital. For discussion of similar themes in the *Hexaemeron* see Mary Whitby 1995. The poem *Against Severus*, which is concerned to refute Monophysitism, also opens with a treatment of Heraclius as saviour and defender of the faith (24–71).

[35] Frendo (1986) argues convincingly that this coherent shaping is evidence that the poem is complete, against Pertusi's defence of a lost third canto (1960, 23–30). Discussion of the final section: Frendo 1976.

[36] 1.70 κοσμορύστης, cf. *Bon.* 7, *Hex.* 1846, *Sev.* 452.

[37] On this aspect of George's presentation of Heraclius see Mary Whitby 1994.

way to God in his first poem (*Her.'s Return* 11–13) is now redefined in the confidence of success. The depiction of Heraclius as a saviour who operates through and for God, Christ and the Divine Logos is developed into a triumphant vision of Heraclius as deliverer of the universe, who has both won the right to world rule (*Hex.* 1845–8) and secured his own place in heaven.[38]

III *Physical virtues*

Heraclius is an emperor whose mind is set on God above all, but he is not other-worldly. On the contrary he is almost unnatural in his eagerness for physical toil. *On Heraclius' Return* masks the illegitimacy of his assumption of power with the point that 'you had the opportunity of remaining apart from toil, since you were not by birth accessory to the ills' (42f.), but his passion to liberate his people from 'the beast who ruled affairs' was such that he 'ran gladly towards such great toils' and was scornful only of his own blood in his eagerness to rescue others (47–50). This voluntary labour is associated with speed—Heraclius characteristically runs in George's poetry—and is combined with personal courage: he 'did not tremble at the long sea voyage' (51) from Africa.

These qualities are amply illustrated in the *Persian Expedition.* In the paradigmatic shipwreck incident of the first canto, Heraclius' response to the sounds of distress is instantaneous: 'And indeed you ran forth to the very vessel, | and labouring drew on all to zeal, | since they blushed while their master suffered toil | in so great a personal deed of good' (1.196–9), and 'thus each man gladly hastened | to take a part share in your sweat' (1.209f.). Heraclius' style is leadership from the front (2.88f.), which has the desired effect of inspiring lesser men to follow suit: in the shipwreck even eunuch attendants join in the rescue (1.205–8), while in battle the soldiers weep to see Heraclius drenched in sweat and with groans join him in slaughtering: 'And every man who lacked courage, looking towards you | transformed his mind to courageousness; | for he knows how to bring a task to fruitfulness, | when the master bears arms before all' (3.89–92). Here follows an imaginary exchange between two soldiers in which the theme is developed

[38] Cf. the apocalyptic prediction attributed to Khusro II at Theoph. Sim. 5.15.3–7.

(3.93–130): the first soldier enumerates Heraclius' physical hardships—uncomfortable armour, hair matted with dust, searing sun, sweat—while his comrade comments on the emperor's apparent pleasure in discomfort: 'he hastens gladly towards the necessities, and considers the toils to be a joy' (3.110f.). Heraclius' physical suffering, his boundless energy, and his irrepressible joy in toil are constant themes.[39]

In connection with Heraclius' physical sweat George repeatedly makes a point which has, I believe, been misunderstood. As early as the *Persian Expedition,* he requests God that Heraclius' sweat may purify him of sin and give him victory over the passions as well as over barbarians (3.407–10). *On Bonus* makes a similar point with more precise reference to 'your sin' (160f.), while the *Hexaemeron* adds the hope that the sweat may win 'a robe of immortality' (1853f.). In the euphoric mood of the *Heraclias,* the statement is more confident: 'But nevertheless I surmise that | whilst the sweat of your labours was poured forth, | the whiteness has passed over into your heart' (*Her.* 1.145–7). Independent evidence that Heraclius' second marriage to his niece Martina was criticized by the Church,[40] led to the suggestion that these passages allude to the emperor's incest.[41] Heraclius has committed a cardinal sin, but has exonerated himself by undergoing hardship. This seems to me unlikely, chiefly because of the contexts in which the comments are made: the only specific reference to Heraclius' personal sin is in *On Bonus,* but this poem is a desperate appeal to Heraclius to return to Constantinople at the time when it was threatened by the Avars. This was not the moment to remind the emperor that the wife who accompanied him on campaign was disapproved by the Church. George's silence about Martina, who might naturally have been included in contexts where Heraclius' children are mentioned, seems to me a more telling indictment,[42] and careful

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[39] *Pers. Exp.* 3.319–21; *Bon.* 79–110 (an elaborate doctor analogy); *Res.* 114–17; *Avar War* 246–66, 280–7; *Her.* 1.148–58.

[40] Nicephorus, ch. 11.

[41] E.g. Pertusi (1960, 160, 173, 267). On incest in Heraclius' family see Mango 1985, 113f. Olster (1994, ch. 3) argues that George presents collective popular sin in the form of political disorder as the cause of Roman disaster, but this view depends on selective treatment of the evidence.

[42] Despite its Constantinopolitan court focus, the *Paschal Chronicle* does not mention Heraclius' second marriage or the births of his children by Martina (Whitby and Whitby xxv).

omission more characteristic of a panegyrist's technique. However, George's Christian stance and his concern with the assaults of the passions which is the central theme of *On the Vanity of Life*, may well have led him to introduce the familiar panegyrical topic that the best emperors are immune to the tyranny of the passions.[43] Heraclius' physical toils and sweat have, in George's Christian perception, constituted a spiritual *athlesis*, and have given him a Christ-like status of immunity to passion through suffering and a secure place in heaven.

IV *Intellectual virtues*

Heraclius' energy is mental as well as physical: 'present to you as a horse swift-running | is your reason which is active everywhere, | filling the earth and transporting to heaven' (*Her.'s Return* 24–6). Speed and comprehensiveness characterize the emperor's intellectual talents: he is a man 'sufficient for all things and in no way narrowed' (*Her.'s Return* 77), who 'spreads wide your mind under constraint of affairs' (*Pers. Exp.* 1.50), a 'single care sufficient for all' (1.222), with a 'mind sufficient which imitates Ocean, | encircling the earth and encompassing the whole, | watering all and remaining filled' (2.49–51), who disperses his mind over all things like the branches of a stream (2.12–18). The cumulative picture of the *Persian Expedition* is summed up in the *Avar War* in describing how Heraclius sent from the East instructions for the defence of the capital: 'So the master, ever-active | in speed of calculations and insatiability of thoughts | from afar stood near the city | and alone was everywhere attendant on our cares, | as one calculation which sufficed on behalf of all' (302–6).

The emperor's intellectual gifts are manifest in his masterly generalship (*Pers. Exp.* 1.19–23), which was backed up by study of military handbooks (*Her.* 2.118–21), the skill with which he retrained his disillusioned troops in 622 (*Pers. Exp.* 1.38–48) and united the armies scattered in Asia Minor (*Pers. Exp.* 2.52–9), his

[43] E.g. Themistius 1 (8.17–25, 9.17–19: Constantius), Evagrius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.1 (Zeno), 6.1 (Maurice); cf. Plu. *Alex.* 21.4. See further Michael Whitby in this volume, Mary Whitby 1995. George's *On the Resurrection* acclaims the virtue of Heraclius Constantine by contrasting his restrained pleasures with the senseless passions of sporting fans (77–96).

mastery and prudence in providing exercises in simulated battles (2.145–8, 159–62), his comprehensive advance planning (2.177–84), and the cunning tactics which he devised against the Persians (2.261–85, 3.30–4, 48–64, 198–224). He did not meet with unqualified success, but was never deterred (*Pers. Exp.* 2.60–3). The versatility of Heraclius' intellect is summed up in the peroration of *Against Severus*, where George apologizes for his own lack of skill in doctrinal issues, accustomed as he has been to dealing with Heraclius' military enterprises (695–9). Heraclius, on the other hand, is less limited: 'For as general you did not neglect words, | and when making speeches did not thrust away the sword. | But like the nature of animals which men say | is amenable both to earth and sea, | so your mind with corresponding nature | is versatile for every enterprise' (700–5).

It may be that one reiterated aspect of George's praise of Heraclius' comprehensive physical and mental versatility reflects criticism.[44] 'For indeed you yourself, master, | while doing so many things contrived to escape notice, | so that the commons might not share in toil' (*Pers. Exp.* 2.63–5); Heraclius' desire to spare the commons is mentioned again at *Bonus* 100f. and *Heraclias* 2.82–9. What is presented as a sign of Heraclius' unstinting care for his people (particularly the *Bonus* passage which forms part of an extended presentation of Heraclius as doctor to his subjects) might be a positive gloss on criticism of Heraclius' protracted absence from public view in the capital, a necessary consequence of his decision to undertake personal command of the eastern armies. Surveys of imperial virtues often comment on accessibility,[45] but George does not single out this quality in Heraclius. Rather, in one of the few places where he admits criticism, he reports controversy about the emperor's decision to lead his troops in person, ending 'yourself, having more accurate understanding of these things, | after granting to all the power of talking, | made God the judge of things unclear.' (*Pers. Exp.* 1.112–29). Heraclius did not heed public opinion on this issue, and in order to avoid it withdrew to the suburban palace of Hieria to prepare for his Persian campaign (*Her.* 2.118–43). The *Heraclias* justifies the emperor's decision to assume military command on the grounds that no one else would have

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44 I am here indebted to Michael Whitby and Peter Heather.

45 E.g. Pliny on Trajan (*Pan.* 49.2), Evagrius on Tiberius (*Ecclesiastical History* 5.13) and Maurice (5.19): see Michael Whitby in this volume.

been up to it (2.83–5), but the passages cited may hint that George glosses over public disquiet at the emperor's absence.

V *Moral virtues*

A final prominent and familiar imperial virtue which George highlights in Heraclius is his mildness and clemency.[46] This is conspicuous in *On Heraclius' Return*, which diplomatically treats it at length before mentioning the bloody coup against Phocas: Heraclius chases away wrath like a wild beast, he wishes to slay the wickedness of sin, even bestial enemies like Medes are tamed by his word, his bow sends forth 'honey-dripping words, by which every man is gladly wounded' (14–29). Limited evidence makes the historical accuracy of these remarks difficult to assess, but the image of imperial mildness is a valuable antidote to the postulated savagery of Phocas.

The prologue to the *Persian Expedition* makes much of this theme: although Homer would have found in Heraclius an embodiment of all four cardinal virtues (1.76–81), it is the honeyed words of Nestor on which George focuses in his post-Homeric hero: Heraclius has no venom; his sting, the laws, may be brandished, but is rapidly pulled back and drips honey instead of gall (1.82–99). The principle is later put into Heraclius' own mouth in a speech: 'For we declare that not so much in fear I as in affection does power shine forth' (2.90f.; cf. *Bon.* 12f.).[47]

Subsequent poems also emphasize this virtue. Although the historical details are unknown, George's appeal to Heraclius to return to the capital in *Bonus* suggests that there had been past bad feeling between the emperor and his people: Heraclius is asked to make light of his childrens' misdemeanours like an indulgent parent (56–75). But the implications of this passage are deliberately undermined in what follows: 'However, these things are not analagous to your power, I you who roused up your fear respecting us I not even as far as apparent temper, I but are so much afire with feelings of affection ...' (76–9). The point is reiterated just before the

[46] Cf. Men. Rhet. 375.8–18.

[47] A similar point is made in the speech of the dying Tiberius to his successor Maurice (Theoph. Sim. 1.1.17–20).

final appeal to Heraclius to return: even if he appears to be angry, he is in fact paradoxically puffed up with mildness (135–8). As in the context of the coup against Phocas which is the centrepiece of *Heraclius' Return*, it seems that the emphasis on Heraclius' mildness in *Bonus* may seek to counteract a different view.

References to conciliatory gestures towards external enemies appear more straightforward. The *Persian Expedition*'s opening excursus on clemency prepares for two incidents which are given prominence later in the poem, Heraclius' unexpected mercy to a captured Arab leader from the enemy side (2.204–38) and his readiness to take back a Persian deserter who returned first to the enemy and then back again to Heraclius (3.143–77). The *Avar War* justifiably stresses Heraclius' repeated efforts to make peace with the Avars, using the parallel of Orpheus already introduced in *Heraclius' Return* (*Avar War* 94–107, cf. *Her.'s Return* 19–23). Although Heraclius is unsuccessful with the Avar khagan, George mentions that 'even the people's boldness is soothed' (*Avar War* 104): the passing reference again hints that Heraclius' regime was the subject of dissension in the capital. This is more explicit in *Heraclias*, which gives a long account of Heraclius' resolution of popular disorder, again using the doctor image (2.34–61). A final reference to Heraclius' conciliatory powers is more upbeat: in *Against Severus* George expresses confidence that the 'deliverer of the world' (452)[48] who slew Khusro and 'charms all the beasts of minds first with weapons, next with words' is likely to silence the heretic Severus, wild though he is (454–8).

In practice, of course, Heraclius' greatest successes were achieved not through conciliation but by might: the coup against Phocas, the repulse of the Avars from Constantinople, the collapse of Persia were not victories of conciliation, even though Heraclius had made efforts to appease his two great external enemies.[49] The victory against Persia was, however, won at a price for the people of Constantinople: the emperor sequestrated church plate in order to pay his troops, and economic crisis forced devaluation and limitation of the distribution of free bread, always unpopular.[50] Heraclius'

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[48] Cf. n.36.

[49] E.g. when the Persians approached Chalcedon in 615 (*Pasch. Chron.* 706–10), and by making peace with the Avars before the 622 campaign (Theoph. 302.28).

[50] See n.14.

reputation for human kindness may well have been shaky in the capital, and his publicist is at pains to counter that impression.

VI *Imperial weaknesses*

George's panegyrics consistently highlight two themes which might have been expected to disappear in works written long after Heraclius' accession. One is the tyranny of Phocas. Since usurpation must have reasonable grounds, champions of Heraclius naturally, and with justification, vilify his allegedly incompetent and ruthless predecessor, but this theme might have seemed superfluous almost twenty years later in the euphoria of victory over Persia, and the panegyrist is traditionally advised that it is 'bad craftsmanship' (ἄτεχνον) to disparage preceding reigns to excess.[51] But the assault on the bloodbath of Phocas' reign which was central to *Heraclius' Return* (39–50) continues to feature prominently right down to the *Heraclias*.[52] It is important that one who might himself be seen as a tyrant (Greek uses the same word *tyrannos* for both 'tyrant and 'usurper') should be presented rather as a destroyer of tyrants, while possible criticism of Heraclius' regime—and even George's panegyric admits to some[53]—is mitigated by reiterated reminders that the situation was worse under his predecessor.

A second recurring theme may respond to disquiet in the capital at Heraclius' protracted absences. On five occasions in poems composed between 612 and 628, George appears to comment that, despite the strong pull of his mother's affection, Heraclius made the difficult choice of fighting abroad for his people instead. At the end of the *Persian Expedition* (3.125–8) one of Heraclius' soldiers comments that Heraclius' love for his mother and children is not so great as that for his people, who are thus inspired to endure danger for him. In the poem *On Bonus* Heraclius is asked to pity his mother's milk and return to the capital (143), while the *Avar War* notes (255f.) that love for his mother did not persuade Heraclius to interrupt his second long Persian campaign and return. The

[51] Men. Rhet. 377.1. See Russell in this volume, but cf. Russell and Wilson xviii n.40: Pliny too highlights the evils of the pre-Trajanic era.

[52] *Bon.* 56–9, *Avar War* 49–53, *Her.* 1.148–51, 2.5–24. Cf. Theoph. Sim. *Hist.* Dial. 4–6, 8.10.4–6.

[53] See sec. IV (end).

Heraclias (1.165f.) comments that love for his mother did not prevent Heraclius' departure on campaign. The *Bonus* reference to mother's milk, as opposed simply to 'mother' provides the clue to interpretation: this is no touching allusion to the pull on the imperial affections of an increasingly elderly lady, but a metaphorical reference to Constantinople, presented as mother city to an emperor of Armenian ancestry whose youth was spent in Africa.[54] This personification of the capital emphasizes the human feeling and personal selflessness of an emperor who was not renowned for his warmth towards or popularity with his subjects, and whose second wife was a controversial figure best passed over in silence.[55] The population of the capital may have felt resentment that Heraclius considered victory over Persia more important than assisting them when Constantinople was under grave threat from Avars and Persians in 626, and it was part of George's task to counter such negative feeling.

What of the remaining allusion to Heraclius' mother? In connection with the coup against Phocas, we are told that Heraclius' ardour to liberate his people was so great, that neither the long sea voyage from Africa nor pity for his mother restrained him (*Her.'s Return* 52). In 610 Heraclius' mother Epiphania and his fiancée Eudocia were detained by Phocas in a monastery in Constantinople,[56] presumably as hostages to deter Heraclius from attacking the capital. This might explain George's reference. However, the manuscript reading at this point is in fact not 'mother', but 'father', the former being an emendation by Sternbach (accepted by Pertusi) on the basis of the maternal allusions discussed above.[57] The elimination of Heraclius' natural mother in the interpretation of these passages suggests that in *Her.'s Return* the manuscript reading should be retained. The elder Heraclius had been concerned about his son's enterprise, but lived to rejoice in his success, although he took ill and died soon afterwards.[58] In this case the reference to parental affection is literal.

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54 *PLRE* III 586. I owe this idea to Peter Heather.

55 The 'mother' reference is coupled with comment on the pull of affection for his children in *Pers. Exp.*, *Avar War* and *Her.* but Martina is never mentioned; cf. sec. III and n.41.

56 John of Nikiu 106, Theoph. 298.21–6.

57 *WS* 13 (1891) 36f., cf. Pertusi 83. This poem survives only in one manuscript, the 11th-c. *Paris supp. gr.* 690.

58 John of Nikiu 110.10–13.

VII *George's image of Heraclius*

George creates his image of Heraclius in the poems composed before the victory over Persia and, because these have less to relate in the way of concrete achievement, considerable attention is devoted to its establishment. The central feature is Heraclius' submission to God's guidance, the athletic piety of a true Christian who through it achieves not only personal but also cosmic salvation. In addition, Heraclius demonstrates qualities fundamental to a good emperor, practical wisdom, courage, mildness and clemency, all of which feature in Menander Rhetor's prototype for imperial panegyric and are prominent in surviving speeches from Pliny onwards. Heraclius' clemency and human feeling may have been the virtue least obvious to the people of the capital, perhaps explaining its particular prominence in the *Persian Expedition*. Although George represents Heraclius as an embodiment of all the major virtues (*Pers. Exp.* 1.66–81), he is chiefly concerned with the emperor as a military leader and the range of his qualities is limited accordingly. The virtues highlighted, and George's frequent recourse to mythological and biblical paradigms,[59] may appear to represent Heraclius as a cardboard caricature of the perfect Christian soldier, but careful reading may reveal a subtext of tension between Heraclius' military successes and problems in Constantinople. Heraclius was not popular with the people of the capital; he was insensitive to popular feeling and withdrew to Hieria to plan his campaigns, as he was to do later in life when afflicted by hydrophobia.[60] Economic crisis forced the imposition of restrictive measures which would have been most severely felt in Constantinople. Above all, he simply was not there—and this after 250 years in which the emperor had almost always remained in the capital—and it was important that public morale be sustained during his long absences by heroic poetry in which a caring emperor played a central role.

VIII *Other Addressees: Bonus and Heraclius Constantine*

During Heraclius' absence, George addressed poems to his deputies, Bonus, civil governor of Constantinople, and Heraclius' eldest

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[59] See Mary Whitby 1994.
[60] Nicephorus, ch. 24.

son, Heraclius Constantine who was nominal regent, although he would have been not quite ten years old when Heraclius first left the capital at Easter 622.[61]

The first forty-eight lines of *On Bonus* are addressed to Bonus, before a direct appeal to Heraclius. The poem opens with the Heracles image much exploited by George in connection with Heraclius, but here Bonus as much as the emperor is the Heracles figure: in the mythical past, Heracles had Eurystheus as overseer of his contests, but today 'the universe-delivering Heracles entrusts | to you his ally in arms a universal contest' (6f.). George's presentation of the relationship between Heraclius and Bonus makes two points: the task assigned to Bonus is a Herculean labour, and second, whereas Heracles performed his labours at the instigation of a cruel taskmaster, Heraclius and Bonus are comrades and equals indistinguishable in their endeavours to achieve cosmic salvation, as in the Herculean image applied to both. The bonds of affection between the two which make them as one are the theme of the remainder of the address to Bonus: theirs is a spiritual union in which 'one soul is attached to two bodies' (27) and 'the master | is within you, even though he seems separated' (47f.). As the enemy army gathered around Constantinople, it was important that its people should feel the protection of the emperor far away on the Persian front. George presents Bonus so as to suggest that his presence is virtually indistinguishable from that of the emperor himself. Individual characterization of Heraclius' deputy would be counter-productive to his cause and is carefully avoided.

Heraclius Constantine, 'the younger power', is the dedicatee of the *Avar War*, which describes the repulse of the Avars a little later. At the end, the poem is offered to him and his forthcoming marriage heralded with the idea that the defeat of the Avars is his marriage-gift (535–41).[62] In later poems Heraclius Constantine is, like Bonus, closely coupled with Heraclius: an epigram which commemorates their building of a hall in the palace links them as kings 'allotted their bliss-bestowing spear from the Cross' (*Anth. Pal.* 9.655.2), where Heraclius' eldest son shares his father's reputation as emperor in Christ through the restoration of the Cross. A longer epigram (48 Sternbach) in which George offers him a poem

[61] See n.23. For Heraclius' interim government see Theoph. 303.3–6.

[62] The marriage did not take place until late 629/early 630: Nicephorus, ch. 17, with Mango 1985, 105, 112.

(presumably because Heraclius was away from the city), as opposed to purple or precious stones, also associates the boy with his father's military achievements: he laboured and soldiered for God with his father, slayer of Khusro, and 'showed that he was a universal slaughterer' (8–10). In these works Heraclius Constantine is set alongside Heraclius, but only to share in his reflected glory.

A more substantial treatment of the young monarch is to be found in *On the Resurrection*, a poem composed when Heraclius was absent on campaign and when the Avar threat remained a menace (112–24), and so perhaps datable to Easter 622 or 624, before the *Avar War*. The first half of the poem deals with the Resurrection theme (1–40) and the Devil's consequent discomfiture (43–63). The white-robed celebration of the Resurrection (1, 40) and condemnation of the black-clad Devil (43) are linked by a two-line address to the recipient: 'And you also now wear your heart white, | for you do not have the dark colours of sin' (41f.).[63] It is not uncharacteristic of George to leave the identity of his addressee unclear,[64] and only later (64f.) is the young emperor identified. This first address links Heraclius Constantine with the Resurrection theme and at the same time conveys his youthful innocence, later treated more fully.

This poem is a fine example of George's ability to unite themes with no natural connection. His picture of Heraclius Constantine provides the articulating links, the boy's innocence and virtue typifies that of the Resurrection (69–76), his immunity even to childish passions contrasts with those who are enslaved by the Devil, and with sporting fans (77–99), his contemplation of the wonders of God's heaven indicates his innate partnership with God (100–5), appropriate to his imperial blood, he is a Heracles in virtue (106–11), and will be a Heraclid in fighting with his father (112–29). This is an idealized portrait, composed with the ardour of Christian conviction, which yet contrives to herald the distant achievements of Heraclius and to offer inspiration to his son to match them. For the interpretation of George's poetry it offers the lesson that the poet is ready not only to apply to Heraclius Constantine (as he had to Bonus) the Heracles image which he created for his father, but even to use identical phraseology.[65]

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63 Cf. *Her.* 1.145-7 and sec. III for this idea in connection with Heraclius.
64 See Mary Whitby 1995 and sec. IX below.
65 *Res.* 106f., cf. *Her.* 1.78f.

IX *Sergius*

After Heraclius, George gives greatest prominence to the Patriarch Sergius, who was associated with Heraclius' cultural revival,[66] and who came to the fore in defending the city against the Avars in 626. As with Bonus and Heraclius Constantine, part of George's task is to present Heraclius' substitute as the equal of the emperor, a task which he naturally fulfilled by suggesting Sergius' affinity with Heraclius in virtue, and conveyed by the use of identical or overlapping imagery.[67] Study of George's depiction of him provides a convenient yardstick for the distinctiveness of his imperial portrait. Hitherto the similarity of the two portraits has been stressed, and indeed in some cases it is difficult to determine which of the two leaders George addresses.[68] Without underestimating this problem, I shall argue that some characteristics also differentiate Sergius.

George's earliest and fullest portrait of Sergius is to be found in the *Avar War*, where the patriarch is given credit for the salvation of the city through intercession with the Virgin and by displaying her icon on the wall at a crucial moment. The contemporary account of the siege in the *Paschal Chronicle* indicates that Bonus also played an important diplomatic role in the defence of the capital, but in George's presentation the Virgin and Sergius are the key saviours, and Bonus a mere ally.[69] This representation of Sergius is decisive for the establishment of his image.

As in *On the Resurrection*, the identity of the poem's recipient is initially unclear. In dedicating his work (10–15), George uses the image of roses among the thorns of battle, previously associated with Heraclius,[70] and the dedicatee is described as 'the cultivator of

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[66] See sec. I.

[67] Most obviously, both Heraclius and Sergius are likened to Moses: see Mary Whitby 1994, 1995 and Claudia Rapp in this volume. Since George uses the Heracles image in connection with Bonus, I am unconvinced by Frendo's argument (1988) that the prologue of Theophylact's *History* cannot refer to Sergius because the Heracles image used there is associated with the emperor; cf. n.26.

[68] See previous note, and cf. Mary Whitby 1995 on problems of the end of the *Hexaemeron*.

[69] *Pasch. Chron.* 718, 720, 726. *Avar War* 313–27 couple Bonus with officials and subjects as loyal collaborators with Sergius. On the Virgin's defence of Constantinople see Baynes 1949, Cameron 1978, 1979.

[70] *Pers. Exp.* 3.374–6, cf. *Her.'s Return* 84f.

mind-sowing words' (12). Such imagery of cultivation and fruitfulness is, I suggest, characteristically applied to Sergius.[71] He is later unequivocally addressed in a long and complex invocation (130–64) which identifies him closely with the Virgin, 'ever sowing | and bearing children for God each day | both virgin and remaining the more a mother: | for now above all you alone are in travail for all | and the entire earth and the city is wrapped in swaddling clothes by you' (131–5). Sergius' use of the Virgin's icon in saving the city generates this extraordinary identification of the patriarch with the Virgin,[72] but it is significant that it is also associated with the idea of fruitfulness.

The theme of Sergius as bringer of fruitfulness continues in a new form a little later (141–64). He is first hailed as 'general of the armed tears' (141), whose tears burn up the barbarian's courage. His streams of tears check the streams of blood in equal measure.[73] He saw 'our thorny squalour | which from the barren wickedness of evils | was already swept towards conflagration and destruction' (145–7), but 'by opening up the springs of your eyes | you water the dry places and bedew the flame, | and transform the fruitless hearts | to bear fruit from the strange shower' (150–3). The following lines explain that the heart can only be fruitful when cleansed like a vine, and by abundant weeping calling forth young grapes, which are then sweetened by the sun. Sergius' warmth, on the other hand, compels us to bear ripe fruits even before the young grapes (154–64).[74]

This extremely complex and evolving image with its biblical associations of the fruitful vine, is founded in the picture of the patriarch's weeping. Tears too, I suggest, are a distinctive feature of George's portrait of Sergius. They are also mentioned at the end of the *Hexaemeron* (1876f.) in conjunction with other characteristics (1869–80) found in this passage of the *Avar War*—his silence (*Avar War* 139, cf. *Hex.* 1871, 1874f.), and his inner warmth (*Avar War* 162–4, cf. *Hex.* 1872).[75] George has other occasion to mention

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[71] Similar imagery is used by Venantius Fortunatus of Martin, bishop of Galicia (5.2.21–43), cf. p.240 above.

[72] This passage is well discussed by Trilling 1978, 257f.

[73] Heraclius is often said to check bloodshed (e.g. *Her.'s Return* 61, *Sev.* 448f.), but never by his tears.

[74] For Sergius' 'pious husbandry' cf. *Avar War* 531f., also *Epigr.* 46.3–10 Sternbach.

[75] See Mary Whitby 1995 for fuller discussion of this material.

Sergius' tears: they are part of the spiritual armoury with which he repels the enemy (*Avar War* 239), and in combination with pity, prayer, fasting (the last also mentioned in the *Hexaemeron*, 1870) and almsgiving enable him to win over the Virgin to save the city through her Son. Heraclius, on the other hand, never weeps in George's poetry: his physical *athlesis* results rather in the outpouring of a different bodily fluid—sweat.[76]

On the basis of this analysis, I believe that the opening lines of the *Hexaemeron* are, like the conclusion of the poem, addressed to Sergius.[77] George there appeals for inspiration in the imagery of drought: 'Implant the streams of your heaven-traversing words | in my moistureless heart. | For in the drought of gloom which now prevails | by necessity I kept my mouth dumb' (3–6). Later he declares: 'I come bearing for you from a desolate heart | fruits cultivated by your dew' (32f.), and then develops the image of Sergius the cultivator, addressed as 'O husbandman of rocks and brambles' (39), and asked to 'water us with the flowing of tears: | perhaps again a child may be born from the barren, | and sound fruit from a fruitless heart' (45–7). A later reference to 'your mystical javelins' (50) is repeated at the end of the poem (1891) and can be connected with the passage on Sergius' spiritual armoury in the *Avar War* (237–42).

These are the most distinctive and also the most fully-developed aspects of George's depiction of Sergius. In other respects the patriarch played a role very similar to that expected of an emperor who had to defend his capital and, given the prominence of piety in George's portrait of Heraclius, there is considerable overlap between the two characterizations. So, for example, Sergius is hailed as 'general of efficacious vigils' (*Avar War* 137, cf. 190f.), which is paralleled by references to Heraclius' wakefulness at the time of the shipwreck in the *Persian Expedition* (1.174–6), and his endurance of 'burdensome watches' in the context of a general survey of his labours in *Bonus* (97f.).[78] Sergius operates single-handed in a complex situation (*Avar War* 191–6) just as Heraclius strives to parry

[76] See sec. III. I owe this point to Claudia Rapp.

[77] Cf. Radošević 1979, 129; Nodes 1996, 276. Ludwig (1991, 104–13) argues for a threefold address to Heraclius, Christ and David. For the end of the poem see Mary Whitby 1995. (Line references are to Migne's text.)

[78] A standard imperial virtue, e.g. Trajan (Pliny, *Pan.* 49.8), satirized in Justinian by Procopius (*Secret History* 13.28–33).

alone the diverse problems with which he was faced—a reiterated point, encapsulated in the extended depiction of Heraclius as a shepherd rushing in all directions to defend his flock (*Pers. Exp.* 3.322–35). Sergius extends 'white sails of calculations' (*Avar War* 210), an image which simultaneously recalls the repeated emphasis on Heraclius' mental capacities, the depiction of the emperor as helmsman (*Pers. Exp.* 1.227–38), and the whiteness of his purified heart (*Her.* 1.147). He hopes when others despair (*Avar War* 223f.), just as Heraclius never gives up (*Pers. Exp.* 1.60–2), and like the emperor the patriarch wishes to pass unnoticed (*Avar War* 227, cf. *Hex.* 1878; *Pers. Exp.* 1.64). George cries to Heraclius 'shine out in winter and you guide on spring (*Bon.* 55), and to Sergius 'O warm spring of my words' (*Van.* 34). Sergius saves the city by running out onto the wall bearing the Virgin's icon, which repulses the enemy as if by a trick (*Avar War* 370–80). Heraclius always runs; he bears an icon before him as he leaves the city (*Pers. Exp.* 1.139–53), when exhorting his troops (*Pers. Exp.* 2.86f.) and when he returns to Constantinople (*Her.* 1.218), and he outwits the Persians by deceptive strategies (*Pers. Exp.* 2.262–4, 3.54–69, 210–12). Heraclius is God's under-general (*Pers. Exp.* 3.401), but Sergius is the 'mouth of God' (*Pan. Anast.* 2.6).

X *Conclusion*

George's portrait of Heraclius is established in his earlier poems by repetition of a limited range of themes, and is later adapted and reasserted more confidently in the light of victory over Persia. Heraclius is endowed with a recognizable set of imperial virtues, but particular prominence is given to qualities which might appear questionable: bloody warfare is equated with pious liberation, remoteness from his people countered by humanity towards individual enemies, controversial generalship presented as unremitting endeavour, and so on. The special task of Heraclius' publicist was to keep the absent emperor in the minds of the citizens of the capital, to gloss over internal dissension and reassure the people that Heraclius had their interests at heart and was acting on their behalf, even when problems in Constantinople made his absence hard to accept. The likeness of Heraclius' deputies to himself is due not to George's ineptitude but to the desire to prove them scarcely

distinguishable from the emperor.[79] Only Sergius, as much George's patron as Heraclius, is given distinctive treatment: his flowing tears demonstrate that his spiritual exertions parallel the physical sweat of the emperor in their capacity to defeat the barbarian, but they also transform barren places into fruitfulness, whether the wicked hearts of sinners or the uninspired heart of the poet.

By the seventh century the standard ingredients of imperial panegyric were unequivocal. Perhaps more than any other, this genre invited replication and reworking of the familiar. But this very familiarity enabled the skilful panegyrist to exploit expectations, whether he sought to support the honorand by boosting deficiencies, by gliding over weaknesses, or by presenting failings as strengths. Even in a well-worn genre, considerable variation can be achieved in the impact made by the total package, and a sophisticated audience is sensitive to omission. Omission may be as significant as inclusion, while repeated points may signal a specific agenda.[80]

[79] See further Rapp in this volume on overlap in presentation of secular and religious leaders.

[80] This paper was written while I enjoyed the support of a Leverhulme Special Research Fellowship. I am grateful to Peter Heather, Claudia Rapp and Michael Whitby for constructive criticism, for comments from the audience at King's College, London where a version of it was delivered in October 1996, and to James Howard-Johnston for long-standing guidance on historical problems.

APPENDIX

Approximate dating of George's poems in relation to major historical events

Date	*Select Events*	*Approximate dates for poems of George*
602	Accession of PHOCAS	
603	Beginning of Persian attacks	
609	Persian capture of Edessa	
610	SERGIUS patriarch of Constantinople HERACLIUS seizes power from Phocas	
611/12		*On Heraclius' Return*
614	Persian capture of Jerusalem & seizure of Holy Cross	
615	Persian approach to Chalcedon	
616	Persian invasion of Egypt	
619	Fall of Alexandria	
622	Heraclius' first Persian expedition	
623	'Avar surprise' at Constantinople	*Persian Expedition*
624	Heraclius departs on second Persian campaign	*On the Resurrection*
626	Avar/Persian siege of Constantinople	*On Bonus*
627		*Avar War*
627/8	Defeat of Persia and death of Khusro II	
628		*Heraclias*
629/30		*Hexaemeron* ?*On the Vanity of Life*
630	Heraclius restores Cross to Jerusalem	*Restoration of the Cross* *Against Severus*
631-8 (?before 634)		*On the Persian martyr Anastasius* (prose)
636	Byzantine defeat by Arabs at the Yarmuk	
638	Death of Patriarch SERGIUS	
641	Death of HERACLIUS	

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SECULAR AND SACRED

CHAPTER ELEVEN

COMPARISON, PARADIGM AND THE CASE OF MOSES IN PANEGYRIC AND HAGIOGRAPHY*

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The interrelation of panegyric and hagiography presents a fascinating, but thorny field of study. Any attempt to investigate the Christian influence on panegyric and the influence of panegyric on Christian writing, and especially on hagiography, will soon encounter a fundamental obstacle. For panegyric is an established literary genre with its own tradition and well-defined rules, while hagiography is actually only defined by its topic: the description of saints and their activities. Such description can take different literary forms—martyr's acts (*acta*), saint's life (*vita*), encomium (*laudatio*), miracle account (*miraculum*) and short edifying story (*narratio animae utilis*)—all of which are indebted, in varying degrees, to established literary traditions of the classical, pagan world. To study the relation of panegyric and hagiography *as genres* is therefore impossible. A more promising approach is to define each form of writing by its subject matter, panegyrics as praising emperors,[1] hagiography as describing saints, and on this basis to explore the interconnections between the two.

In the following, I shall stake out the common ground in the literary representation of emperors and saints by examining the instances where emperors are shown to have saintly qualities on the one hand, and the powers of saints are said to rival those of emperors, on the other. I begin with a brief outline of two rhetorical devices for describing individuals by way of juxtaposition, and

* I am grateful to Peter Brown and Hal Drake for commenting on a first draft of this article, and to Jason Moralee for his research assistance.

[1] See esp. Mause 1994. For general discussions of the Christian impact on late-antique literature see G.A. Kennedy, *Greek Rhetoric under Christian Emperors* (Princeton, 1983) and Averil Cameron, *Christianity and the Rhetoric of Empire. The development of Christian discourse* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1991).

then investigate their application in the literary treatment of saints and emperors. The second part of this article focuses on the biblical figure of Moses who is often adduced as a model in the description of saints and emperors alike. The prolific literary output of the Christian Greek authors of the fourth and fifth centuries provides ample material for such an investigation. This was the time when, thanks to imperial support and patronage, Christianity was gaining a greater public profile and Christian ideas began to infuse the culture and political ideology of the Roman empire. The findings of the present study can serve as an illustration for the fluidity of the definitions of secular power and sacral authority in this formative period as they are reflected in the literary production of the adherents and advocates of the new religion.

An effective way to define and describe a subject, whether an emperor, a saint or someone else, was through juxtaposition. Ancient rhetorical theorists knew of two ways of applying this method: *exemplum* and *comparatio*. The *exemplum* (Greek: *paradeigma*) is usually a prominent person from history or mythology in whose footsteps the subject is said to follow or whose characteristic virtue he is said to imitate.[2] The *exemplum* thus looks to the past in an effort to demonstrate that the subject adheres to and represents a specific tradition. It is therefore particularly suitable for historical writing, although it also finds application in works with an encomiastic tendency.[3] Roman historians frequently made recourse to the use of *exemplum*, for reasons explained by Livy in the introduction to his *Roman History*: 'What chiefly makes the study of history wholesome and profitable is this, that you behold the lessons of every kind of experience (*omnis ... exempli documenta*) set forth as on a conspicuous monument; from these you may choose for yourself and for your own state what to imitate, from these mark for avoidance what is shameful in the conception and shameful in the result.'[4] To facilitate the selection of appropriate *exempla*, they were often assembled in handbooks, such as the

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[2] Quintilian 5.11.1–21 (279.8–283.22 ed.Winterbottom; 271–9 trans. Butler). Cf. also Aristotle, *Ars rhetorica* 1.2.13–19 = 1357a13–1357b36 (25–9 trans. Freese); Lausberg 1960, 227–35; H. Kornhardt, *Exemplum. Eine Bedeutungsgeschichtliche Studie* (Göttingen, 1936); H.W. Litchfield, 'National *Exempla Virtutis* in Roman Literature', *HSCP* 25 (1914) 1–71.

[3] The use of *exempla* in the *Panegyrici Latini* has been studied by Portmann 1988.

[4] Livy, praef. 10 (I 7 trans. Foster).

collection produced by Valerius Maximus under the Emperor Tiberius which enjoyed enormous popularity in the Middle Ages.[5]

Comparatio (Greek: *synkrisis*) is the detailed comparison of one person with another, which may result either in establishing equality between the two, or in asserting the superiority of one over the other.[6] In the latter application, *comparatio* becomes an essential part of any encomium or panegyric,[7] in that it allows the author to demonstrate that his object of praise surpasses other great figures from history or mythology. *Comparatio* can be applied either individually (the subject surpasses some other figure) or cumulatively (the subject surpasses a whole group of individuals).[8] Some theorists of the art of rhetoric underline the importance of the right choice of the *comparans*, insisting that the proper laudatory effect can only be accomplished through comparison with another who at first appears equal, but is then shown to be inferior.[9] In contrast to the use of *exemplum*, which emphasizes continuity with the past, *comparatio* implies that progress and improvement are made manifest in the present.

Descriptions of saints

When saints are said to follow certain *exempla*, the great men of the Old Testament, such as Abraham, Jacob, Moses, the Prophets, or John the Baptist and the Apostles are chosen as proper for juxtaposition. A saint will be praised either for emulating a long list of such *exempla*, or one person specifically.[10] Each of these great men of the Scriptures can also become the topic of a detailed comparison (*comparatio*) in favour of a saint.[11]

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[5] R. Helm, 'Valerius Maximus', *RE* VIIIA (Stuttgart, 1958) 90–116.

[6] Lausberg 1960, 542f.; F. Focke, 'Synkrisis', *Hermes* 58 (1923) 327–68.

[7] Hermogenes, *Progymnasmata* 8 (18–20 Rabe). Cf. also Aristotle, *Ars rhetorica* 1.9.38–40 = 1368a19–31 (103–5 trans. Freese).

[8] On the use of *comparatio* in encomia, especially those on emperors, see Menander Rhetor 376.31–377.9.

[9] References in Focke (n.6) 335f.

[10] For an excellent overview of the use of *exempla* in Jewish and Christian literature see A. Lumpe, 'Exemplum', *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* VI (Stuttgart, 1966) 1229–57.

[11] J. Bauer, *Die Trostreden des Gregorios von Nyssa in ihrem Verhältnis zur antiken Rhetorik* (Marburg, 1892) 49f.

The most striking application of *comparatio* in the description of saints is the comparison between saint and emperor, which invariably culminates in an assertion of superiority of the former over the latter. Here, the author's aim is not to demonstrate that the saint he is describing eclipses a specific emperor, but rather to show that the saint surpasses any and all emperors or the imperial office in general. Such comparisons are made in general terms in treatises advocating the ascetic life which enforce the point that the man or the woman who has chosen to lead a life pleasing to God is ultimately superior in wealth, power and influence even to an emperor. This notion is the premise of John Chrysostom's *Against the Opponents of the Monastic Life*[12] and of the *Comparison between a King and a Monk*, which is—falsely—ascribed to the same author.[13] John Chrysostom applies the same reasoning in his treatise *On the Priesthood* in order to highlight the greatness of this ecclesiastical office.[14]

When a particular saint is praised by way of comparison with the emperor, this is achieved by focusing on a specific aspect of the manifestation of imperial power. Most common are comparisons of the popularity of the saint with the honours bestowed on an emperor.[15] For example, the joyous reception of the saint by a crowd of people is often said to rival the ceremonies surrounding the solemn arrival of the emperor in a city (*adventus*).[16] Gregory Nazianzen makes this connection in a humorous way when he refers to Patriarch Athanasius' return from his second exile in 346. He imagines a conversation between two onlookers in the crowd which had gathered to witness Athanasius' arrival. One turns to the other and asks, who could possibly be the recipient of such a grand welcome, if not the Emperor Constantius. The other replies

12 *PG* 47. 319–86.

13 *PG* 47. 387–92.

14 *PG* 48, esp. 3.1 (640f.), 3. 5–6 (643f.) (NPNF IX 45–8).

15 John Chrysostom emphasizes that the tombs of the martyrs are more splendid and attract greater crowds than those of emperors: *Hom. 26 in Epist. II ad Cor.* (*PG* 61.582).

16 General popularity of the saint: Gregory of Nyssa, *De S. Theodoro martyre*, *PG* 46. 740c. See also S. MacCormack, 'Change and Continuity in Late Antiquity: The ceremony of *adventus*', *Historia* 21 (1972) 721–52, esp. 747f.; M. McCormick, *Eternal Victory. Triumphal rulership in late antiquity. Byzantium and the early medieval West* (Cambridge, 1986) 64; K.G. Holum, G. Vikan, 'The Trier Ivory, *Adventus* Ceremonial, and the Relics of St Stephen', *DOP* 33 (1979) 115–33, esp. 115–20.

that the man whose arrival has attracted this multitude is none other than the Patriarch Athanasius.[17] We also encounter comparisons of the external appearance of a saint with the splendour surrounding the emperor: it was said that the face of the Egyptian hermit Abba Pambo was illuminated like that of Moses during his encounter with God, and the saint appeared as splendid as the emperor sitting on his throne.[18] In the literary description of saints in late antiquity, then, *comparatio* with emperors plays an important part. It serves an explanatory and illustrative purpose by setting a new type of celebrity, the Christian holy man, in relation to the existing and well-entrenched figure of the emperor, and at the same time introduces an element of assertion and competition by emphasizing the elevated position of the saint with regard to the emperor.

Descriptions of emperors

In the works of Eusebius in the first half of the fourth century and in the *Church Histories* of Socrates, Sozomen and Theodoret, all of which were composed around the middle of the fifth century, emperors are often described as saintly or set in relation to saintly models. It is important to bear in mind that the saintliness of emperors is not the same as that of saints. According to the late-antique thought world, by the time of Constantine, when the age of the martyrs had come to a close, saints acquired their status through their own ascetic efforts which were first made possible by God's grace, and then rewarded by divine gifts such as foreknowledge and healing. The saintliness of emperors, too, had both an external and an internal source, but these stood in exactly the opposite relation to each other. The aura of sacrality which surrounded the emperor, and was elaborately expressed in court ceremonial, derived from the imperial office that he received through divine intervention and continued to hold by divine grace. The sacrality of the emperor was, first and foremost, the manifestation of this external gift from God. It was also the confirmation that the emperor was, in fact, a worthy recipient of this

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17 Gregory Nazianzen, *Or. 21 In laudem Athanasii* (*PG* 35.1113d–16a).

18 *Apophthegmata*, Pambo 12 (*PG* 65.372a; trans. B. Ward, *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers* (London, 1975) 166).

gift, which he only enjoyed as long as he ruled with justice, philanthropy and piety. The emperor thus owed a special debt of gratitude for his office to the divinity and, in addition, bore the particular responsibility to fulfil his role as a model citizen, and hence as a model Christian. Emperors were thus regularly shown as pious and religiously observant.[19]

Some emperors, however, stood out to late-antique authors because of the exceptional intensity of their piety and devotion. Constantine, as he is described by Eusebius, is a prime example and will be discussed below. After him, it is Theodosius I who is noted for his piety, which gains in intensity in the description of each successive author. Socrates' account is still relatively modest: through the emperor's prayers and with the help of a miraculous windstorm, the usurper Eugenius, a champion of the pagan cause, was crushed at the battle at the river Frigidus in 395.[20] The next church historian, Sozomen, expands on the theme of victory accomplished through the emperor's piety. He relates that before setting out on the campaign against Eugenius, Theodosius offered up prayers at the chapel of John the Baptist in the Hebdomon quarter, just outside Constantinople's walls,[21] which housed the saint's relics, brought there earlier in the emperor's reign. A miraculous occurrence at that shrine, at the very moment when Eugenius was captured, announced the favourable outcome of the event to the Constantinopolitans and gave positive proof of the efficacy of Theodosius' prayers for victory at this chapel. Theodoret, who writes his *Church History* at about the same time as Sozomen, weaves the events surrounding the battle at the Frigidus into an elaborate story that underscores the emperor's devotion: before embarking on the campaign, Theodosius consulted the Egyptian ascetic John of Lycopolis who had the gift of foreknowledge and was able to assure the emperor of a victorious outcome.[22] Shortly before the decisive battle, Theodosius spent the night in fervent prayer. He then had a vision of John the Evangelist and the Apostle Philip, both on horseback and dressed in white, as they

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[19] See esp. G.F. Chesnut, *The First Christian Histories. Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret and Evagrius* (Paris, 1977) 223–42.

[20] Socrates, *HE* 5.25.12–14 (308.21–309.5 Hansen; 135f. trans. Zenos).

[21] Sozomen, *HE* 7.24.1–9 (337.10–338.23 Bidez-Hansen; 393 trans. Hartranft).

[22] Theodoret, *HE* 5.24.1–2 (324.8–16 Parmentier; 149 trans. Jackson).

hurried to his assistance and organized his troops.[23] Theodoret concludes his account with the following approving remark: 'Such was Theodosius in peace and in war, ever asking and never refused the help of God'.[24]

Theodosius' son and successor in Constantinople, Arcadius, was also considered to have led a saintly life. The church historian Socrates is the only author to make this claim, based on the popular opinion that the emperor's prayers on one occasion saved many lives. Arcadius, he reports, went to pray at the small chapel of saint Acacius which was located within a large building (*oikos*). Soon after the emperor left, the building collapsed, but thankfully, no one was harmed. For all the inhabitants had left the building and were crowding around the emperor, trying to catch a glimpse of the distinguished visitor on his departure.[25] It is worthy of note that the miraculous sparing of many lives is not attributed to the saint to whom the chapel is dedicated, but to the prayers that the emperor offered at his shrine. In their descriptions of the personal piety of Theodosius and Arcadius, the church historians focus on one aspect only: the power of the emperors' prayers. They thus ascribe to the emperor, albeit within a Christian framework, the traditional role of arch-priest, leader of his people in prayer and mediator between his people and God, which looks back to Jewish and Hellenistic conceptions of kingship.[26]

Theodosius the Younger, the son and successor of Arcadius, is the first emperor to be represented as a veritable saint, dedicated to a life of asceticism and prayer. A detailed account is given in Socrates' *Church History* which deals with Theodosius II's reign exclusively from the point of view of his piety. Socrates' narrative technique also makes use of elements that are typical in hagiographic writing: in an introductory paragraph, he points out that as the author of a truthful account that is worth preserving for posterity, he sets himself apart from those who compose works in praise of emperors merely to please the recipient or to display their rhetorical skill.[27] This is a commonplace which is typical of epideictic

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23 Theodoret, *HE* 5.24.4–10 (325.2–326.6 Parmentier; 149f. trans. Jackson).
24 5.24.17 (327.10–12 Parmentier; 150 trans. Jackson).
25 Socrates, *HE* 6.23.1–6 (347.1–16 Hansen; 153 trans. Zenos).
26 See Dvornik, 1966 I *passim*.
27 Socrates, *HE* 7.21.10–22.1 (368.11–18 Hansen; 164 trans. Zenos).

oratory, and over the course of the fourth century was also gaining popularity with authors of hagiographical works. Socrates then illustrates Theodosius II's philanthropy by giving in direct quotation two brief remarks of the emperor.[28] This technique is reminiscent of the *Sayings of the Desert Fathers* (*Apophthegmata patrum*) whose brief words of spiritual insight are meant to reveal the inner virtues of the holy men of the Egyptian desert.

All church historians agree that Theodosius II led the life of a monk. Under the influence of his pious elder sister Pulcheria, he conducted himself with such exceptional personal piety that the imperial palace was made to resemble a monastery. Together with his sisters, he began the day with psalmody; he knew the Holy Scriptures by heart, owned a collection of holy books and commentaries and engaged in pious conversation with bishops, thus assuming for himself the position of a priest.[29] His philanthropy prompted him to suspend capital punishment.[30] He spared no effort in striving to emulate saintly ecclesiastics, seeking possession of the cloak of the bishop of Hebron who had died in the capital, and putting it on himself, 'hoping that thus he should become a partaker in some degree of the sanctity of the deceased'.[31] He also initiated and led a procession—dressed as a private citizen—to propitiate God during a heavy storm.[32] He was distinguished by his gentleness, just as Moses had been a paragon of this virtue.[33] With regard to his military successes too, Theodosius the Younger is deemed worthy of comparison with Moses, a distinction which he shares with Constantine, as will be seen below: when upon the death of his uncle Honorius a civil war threatened the throne in Italy, Aspar and his men succeeded in capturing the usurper John in Ravenna, after an angel had assured their safe and dry passage through the harbour just as Moses had led his people through the Red Sea—all through the intervention of the prayers of Theodosius II.[34]

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[28] 7.22.9–10 (369.13–18 Hansen; 165 trans. Zenos).
[29] 7.22.4–5 (368.24–369. 5 Hansen; 164 trans. Zenos).
[30] 7.22.11 (369.18–21 Hansen; 165 trans. Zenos).
[31] 7.22.14 (370.2–5 Hansen; 165 trans. Zenos).
[32] 7.22.15–18 (370.5–18; 165 trans. Zenos).
[33] 7.42.2 (390.26–391.1; 176 trans. Zenos).
[34] 7.22.21 (370.24–7; 165 trans. Zenos) and 7.23.9–10 (371.19–26; 166 trans. Zenos).

If Theodosius II's description by Socrates is partly inspired by hagiographical precedent, it is not surprising that he should also be the only emperor—at least to my knowledge—to become the subject of an edifying story, transmitted independently among the *Sayings of the Desert Fathers* (*Apophthegmata patrum*) in which he emerges victorious from the scrutiny of *comparatio* with a saint.[35] According to the account, a hermit who had spent forty years of hardship and austerity in the desert of Transjordan asked God if there was any person who was his equal in ascetic accomplishments. Much to his dismay and consternation, he received the answer that the only person to surpass him was the Emperor Theodosius. The hermit then set out to Constantinople where the emperor received him with great humility. When questioned by the hermit, Theodosius reluctantly admitted to his ascetic practices: wearing a hair shirt under the imperial purple, sexual abstinence, fasting, avoidance of baths, and care for the destitute and sick. What is more, Theodosius confessed that even on the most splendid imperial occasions, such as the races in the hippodrome, he retained his humble frame of mind and hardly noticed the crowds and the excitement around him. At the end of their conversation, the hermit had to acknowledge that he had finally found his match.

This story is interesting both for its literary form as well as its views on sanctity and rulership: clothed in the typical hagiographical account of a short edifying story (*narratio animae utilis*) it shows the emperor as an accomplished monastic who withstands even the most probing scrutiny. But at the same time, it presents an emperor who completely conforms to the image of the perfect prince, as the master of his passions and as the embodiment of virtues, which was propagated, among other places, in panegyrics and mirrors of princes. In this description of Theodosius II, the perfect emperor and the true saint have become one and the same.

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[35] F. Nau, 'Jean Rufus, Plérophories' in *Patrologia Orientalis* VIII 1 (Paris, 1912) 171–4. Cf. also Ch. Loparev, *Vizantijskij vremennik* 5 (1898) 67–76. For further manuscripts of this story (*BHG* 1445v) see F. Halkin, *Novum auctarium bibliothecae hagiographicae graecae*, Subsidia hagiographica 65 (Brussels, 1984) 348. For a discussion of this story as depicting the emperor as a saint in disguise see S. Ivanov, 'From "Secret Servants of God" to "Fools for Christ's Sake" in Byzantine Hagiography' in *The Holy Fool in Byzantium and Russia. Papers Presented at a Symposium Arranged by the Norwegian Committee for Byzantine Studies, 28 August 1993 at the University of Bergen*, ed. I. Lunde (Bergen, 1995) 8.

Moses as a model

The imperial role required that the emperor was first and foremost set in relation with *exempla* from Roman history, preferably great men of the Republic or of the early empire. 'More successful than Augustus, better than Trajan' was how emperors were still acclaimed by the Senate in the fourth century.[36] Most of the men who are adduced as *exempla* for emperors in panegyrical oratory or in historiography were selected because of their commendable actions or because of their role as leaders, not because of their piety and devotion.

A notable exception are figures from the Old Testament, particularly Moses and David. This raises an interesting point: although the David imagery came to great prominence in the imperial ideology of Byzantium, where he represented the prototype of divinely appointed rulership and imperial victory,[37] in the late-antique descriptions of emperors David is relatively marginal. In contrast to David, Moses personifies religious as well as political and military leadership. He is lawgiver, arch-priest, prophet and king,[38] and thus the perfect prototype for any Christian, and especially for saints and emperors.

In the period of late antiquity, Moses was held in high regard by Jews, pagans and Christians alike. He was admired by the pagans for his contributions to the progress of civilization, while the Christians saw him as an earlier version either of Christ,[39] or of the Apostles, especially of Peter.[40] The Jews, by contrast, maintained

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[36] Eutropius, *Breviarium* 8.5.3 (51.22, ed. Santini, Leipzig, 1979); trans. H.W. Bird, Translated Texts for Historians 14 (Liverpool, 1993), 50.

[37] O. Treitinger, *Die oströmische Kaiser- und Reichsidee nach ihrer Gestaltung im höfischen Zeremoniell* (Jena, 1938, repr. Darmstadt, 1969) 13.

[38] *Constitutiones apostolicae* 6.19.4 (II 356.23f. ed. Metzger, Paris, 1986; ANF VII 458). On the influence of the Moses imagery on Byzantine imperial ideology see Dvornik 1966, *passim.*

[39] See, for example, Orosius, *Adversum paganos* 7.27.3 (496.4–6 ed. C. Zangemeister, CSEL 5 (Vienna, 1882); 325 trans. R.J. Deferrari, FOTC L (Washington, 1964)). Cf. J.E. Bruns, 'The "Agreement of Moses and Jesus" in the "Demonstratio Evangelica" of Eusebius', *Vig. Christ.* 31 (1977) 117–25; M.J. Hollerich, 'Religion and Politics in the Writings of Eusebius: Reassessing the first "Court Theologian"', *Church History* 59 (1990) 309–25.

[40] Tertullian, *Aduersus Marcionem* 4.24 (III 502.9f. ed. E. Kroymann, CSEL 47, Vienna and Leipzig, 1906) For further literary and artistic evidence see also C.A. Kneller, 'Moses und Petrus', *Stimmen aus Maria-Laach* 60 (1901) 237–57.

that Moses was greater than Jesus.[41] The pervasive appeal of the figure of Moses also found its expression in art: twenty-nine sarcophagi, all from the fourth century, show the Crossing of the Red Sea under the leadership of Moses.[42]

The literary tradition of celebrating the exemplary character of Moses begins in the first century AD with the Jewish author Flavius Josephus. He incorporates a long account of the life of Moses in his *Jewish Antiquities*, highlighting his pivotal role in the history of the Jewish people and his elevated position among humans due to his extraordinary virtues and abilities.[43] Flavius Josephus' near-contemporary and co-religionist Philo of Alexandria establishes Moses as the prototype of the pious man in his *Life of Moses*: 'in himself and in his life displayed for all to see, he [Moses] has set before us, like some well-wrought picture, a piece of work beautiful and godlike, a model for those who are willing to copy it'.[44] Later in his work, Philo praises Moses for combining in himself all the virtues which are characteristic of kings, philosophers, lawgivers, arch-priests and prophets.[45]

Among the church fathers, too, Moses' life is regarded as exemplary to Christians of many different callings. Writing about a century and a half after Philo, and acknowledging his debt to him, Clement of Alexandria attempts to show in his *Stromateis* that Moses is the prototype of any perfect ruler, lawgiver and general, a claim which he illustrates with examples from Greek history and mythology.[46] Moses is also the true sage (*sophos*) and, by virtue of having communicated the divine law, the true shepherd of his people.[47] Gregory of Nyssa in the late fourth century follows in

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[41] Anastasius Sinaita, *Viae dux* 14.1 (257.34–258.67 ed. K.-H. Uthemann, CC series graeca 8, Turnhout, 1981).

[42] C. Rizzardi, *I sarcofagi paleocristiani con rappresentazione del passaggio del Mar Rosso*, Saggi d'arte e d'archeologia dell'istituto di antichità ravennati e bizantine dell'università degli studi di Bologna 2 (Faenza, 1970). This work supersedes the articles by Becker 1910 and 1913.

[43] Flavius Josephus, *Antiquitates Iudaicae*, 2.217–4.331 (128–290 ed. B. Niese (Berlin, 1955, repr. of the 2nd edition); IV 259–635 trans. H.St.J. Thackeray (Cambridge, Mass., 1961)).

[44] Philo of Alexandria, *De uita Mosis*, 1.28.158 (IV 158.10–13 Cohn; VI 359 trans. Colson). On Philo's treatment of Moses see also L. Bieler, *ΘΕΙΟΣ ΑΝΗΡ. Das Bild des göttlichen Menschen in Spätantike und Frühchristentum*, 2 vols. (Vienna, 1935–6, repr. Darmstadt, 1967).

[45] Philo 2.1.1–3 (200.3–201.3 Cohn; 451–3 trans. Colson).

[46] Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 1.(22).150.5–(29)182.3 (II 93.11–112.4 ed. O. Stählin, 3rd. ed. rev. L. Früchtel, Berlin, 1960) .

[47] 1.(26)168.4–169.3 (105.5–21 Stählin–Früchtel).

Philo's footsteps in composing a *Life of Moses*. He does so at the request of a young man who had asked to be given a precept for the perfect life.[48] In another work, Gregory says that 'the great Moses is set forth as a common example for all who those who look to virtue.'[49] The powerful effect of the life of Moses as a common and universal model is also underlined by Basil of Caesarea when he says that the moment we hear it, 'we are immediately captured by yearning for the virtue of the man.'[50]

If Moses was the model for any perfect and virtuous man, then this especially applied to saints. And indeed, the hagiographical literature abounds with comparisons between saints and Moses. These take three different forms: first, a specific action of the saint is compared to a specific aspect of, or event in, the life of Moses.[51] The martyr Mamas, for instance, is said to follow the example of Moses since he, too, had the occupation of a shepherd.[52] Second, Moses may be included in an enumeration of *exempla* from the Old Testament—augmented, on occasion, with figures from the New Testament, especially John the Baptist and the Apostles—which a saint is said to emulate and often to surpass. Gregory Nazianzen's *Oration on Athanasius of Alexandria* skilfully combines *exemplum* and *comparatio* in such a way. First comes a long list of names, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the Twelve Patriarchs, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, the Judges, Samuel, David, Solomon, Elias, Elisha, the Prophets, John the Baptist, the Disciples of Christ, those who were ennobled by their miracles and those who suffered a violent death for their faith. Athanasius is then set in relation to these luminaries: 'Athanasius took up the competition

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[48] Gregory of Nyssa, *De uita Moysis* 1 (VII/1.2.8f. ed. H. Musurillo, Leiden, 1964).

[49] Gregory of Nyssa, *In laudem fratris Basilii* 20 (40.15–19 Stein).

[50] Basil of Caesarea, *In Gordium martyrem* (*PG* 31.492a).

[51] Basil of Caesarea is brought up in the educational system of his surroundings, just like Moses: Gregory of Nyssa, *In laudem fratris Basilii* 1 (4.12–17 Stein). Basil is also applauded for this in Gregory's *De uita Moysis* 2 (VII/1.68.22–69.3 Musurillo). Paul's apostolic activities are compared to those of Moses: John Chrysostom, *Panégyriques de S. Paul* 7.4 (302 ed., trans. and comm. A. Piédnagel, Sources chrétiennes 300, Paris, 1982). Moses is invoked as precedent for the transferral of the relics of Saint Babylas by the Caesar Gallus: John Chrysostom, *De S. hieromartyre Babyla* (*PG* 50.531f.; 142 trans. T.P. Brandram, NPNF IX). Meletius' arrival as the new bishop of Antioch, upon which he immediately proceeds to expel the heretics, is compared to Moses' arrival in Egypt: John Chrysostom, *Homily on Meletius* (*PG* 50.516).

[52] Basil of Caesarea, *In Mamantem martyrem* (*PG* 31.593b).

against some of these, he lagged a little behind others, but there are yet others whom he surpassed, if that is not too bold a statement.' What is more, the account continues, Athanasius embodied the different virtues represented by each of these men, thus outdoing them all.[53] In much the same way, in the *Life of Ephrem the Syrian*, ascribed to Gregory of Nyssa, the *comparatio* of Ephrem with Moses occupies a prominent place, especially concerning the saint's role in providing guidance through the 'Red Sea' of false beliefs.[54] Third and last, a saint may be set in relation to Moses through detailed *comparatio*. In contrast to the cases discussed above, where a brief *comparatio* is embedded in a list of *exempla*, *comparatio* here is accorded a specific and isolated place in the narrative. The eulogy by Gregory of Nyssa on his deceased brother Basil of Caesarea, for instance, concludes with the detailed demonstration of the many parallels between the life of Basil and that of Moses.[55] A further example for *comparatio* with Moses is a sermon on John the Baptist attributed to John Chrysostom, which juxtaposes the benefits brought to the Ephesians by John the Baptist with Moses' deeds on behalf of Egypt.[56] Gregory Nazianzen displays a predilection for

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[53] Gregory Nazianzen, *Or. 21 In laudem Athanasii* (*PG* 35.1085). See also Gregory of Nyssa, *De Meletio episcopo* (*PG* 46.857c); Gregory Nazianzen, *Or. 43 In laudem Basilii magni* (*PG* 36.589–97; 88–94 trans. L.P. McCauley, FOTC XXII); John Chrysostom, *Panégyriques de S. Paul* 1.1 (114–33 Piédnagel); John of Damascus, *Encomium in sanctum Ioannem Chrysostomum* (*PG* 96.777c–d). Along with Elias and John the Baptist, Moses is a model for those who are fasting: Basil of Caesarea, *Constitutiones asceticae* (*PG* 31.1357c–1360a; trans. M.M. Wagner, *The Long Rules* in *Saint Basil, Ascetical Works*, FOTC IX 269). Similarly, but with the exclusion of John the Baptist: Theodoret, *HR* 26.7 (Symeon; II 173 ed. Canivet and Leroy-Molinghen; 163 Price).

[54] Gregory of Nyssa, *Vita S. patris Ephraem Syri* (*PG* 46.844d–845a).

[55] Gregory of Nyssa, *In laudem fratris Basilii* 20–3 (40.15–50.9 Stein). Preceding the *comparatio* with Moses are similar, but shorter comparisons with Paul, John the Baptist, Elias, and Samuel. See also the detailed discussion by M. Harl, 'Moise figure de l'évêque dans l'éloge de Basile de Grégoire de Nysse (381)' in *The Biographical Works of Gregory of Nyssa. Proceedings of the Fifth International Colloquium on Gregory of Nyssa (Mainz, 6-10 September 1982)*, ed. A. Spira (Cambridge, Mass., 1984). On Gregory's interpretation of Moses in general see the detailed work by J. Daniélou, 'Moses bei Gregor von Nyssa. Vorbild und Gestalt' in *Moses in Schrift und Überlieferung* (Düsseldorf, 1963, first published in French: *Moise, l'homme de l'Alliance*, Paris, 1954).

[56] John Chrysostom, *In laudem sancti Joannis theologi* (*PG* 61.719–20). Theodoret of Cyrrhus connects the ascetic Julian with Moses: Julian returns from a period in the desert like Moses descending from Mount Sinai, his prayer brings forth a well, and he builds a chapel on Mount Sinai on the spot where Moses had spoken with God: Theodoret, *HR* 2.4 (I 202f. Canivet and Leroy-Molinghen; 25 Price), 2.8 (I 214 Canivet and Leroy-Molinghen; 27f. Price);

comparisons with Moses in his funerary orations: his father Gregory the Elder is a second Aaron or Moses,[57] and imitates Moses in praying to God on behalf of his people;[58] Gregory's friend Basil is said to have the philanthropy typical of a Moses or an Elias,[59] and follows the example of Aaron and Moses in admonishing those who have gone astray.[60]

It is important to note that laudatory comparisons with Moses are applied particularly to men who are not only distinguished by their exemplary lives of piety, but who also occupy positions of responsibility, Basil the Elder being a rhetor and Basil holding the episcopate of Caesarea. In fact, Moses seems to be adduced as the model of preference in the literary representation of bishops. Many bishops themselves invoked Moses as precedent for their own actions, sometimes with an apologetic intention: when John Chrysostom returned to Constantinople after a long absence in Asia Minor, he found himself in a situation that contrasted favourably with that which Moses faced after spending forty years in the desert. He ends his sermon in a long *comparatio* with Moses, concluding: 'This we experienced, I and Moses.'[61] Similarly, Athanasius justified his flight from Arian persecution by pointing to biblical precedent, including Moses' flight from the anger of Pharaoh.[62] Finally, Theophilus of Alexandria is reported to have called himself 'another Moses' in an attempt to silence his critics who had attacked him because of his unprecedented move in ordaining a bishop without assigning him an episcopal see.[63]

2.13 (I 222–4 Canivet and Leroy-Molinghen; 29 Price).

[57] Gregory Nazianzen, *Oratio 7 in laudem Caesarii fratris* (*PG* 35.757c; trans. L.P. McCauley, FOTC XXII (New York, 1953) 6).

[58] Gregory Nazianzen, *Oratio 18 funebris in patrem* (*PG* 35.1021a; trans. McCauley, FOTC XXII 142).

[59] Gregory Nazianzen, *Oratio 43 funebris in laudem Basilii magni* (*PG* 36.544b; 57f. trans. McCauley).

[60] Ibid 593b–c (90f. trans. McCauley).

[61] John Chrysostom, *De regressu* 5 (ed. W. Wenger, 'L'homélie de saint Jean Chrysostome "A son retour d'Asie"', *Revue des études byzantines* 19 (1961) 110–23 at 114).

[62] Athanasius, *Apologia de fuga sua* (*PG* 25.657a; trans. M. Atkinson, NPNF IV 258).

[63] Palladius, *Dialogus* 7.15 (ed. A.-M. Malingrey, Sources chrétiennes 341 (Paris, 1988) 142; trans. R.T. Meyer (New York, 1985) 45). Cf. John Chrysostom, *In Diodorum Tarsensem* (*PG* 52.761): Bishop Diodorus used to call John, then still a deacon, 'the staff of Moses,' thus claiming for himself, as a bishop, the role of Moses. Another example of self-comparison with Moses by a bishop is Theodoret of Cyrrhus: at the outset of the composition of his

One author who systematically applies the model of Moses in order to expound the honour of a saintly bishop is Palladius in his *Dialogue on the Life of John Chrysostom.* This work was composed after John Chrysostom had been sent into exile by an empire-wide coalition consisting of ecclesiastical, aristocratic and court circles in Constantinople, supported by the bishops of Asia Minor and the Patriarch of Alexandria. On three occasions, Palladius sets John's suffering in relation to events in the life of Moses: John is placed under house arrest by the emperor Arcadius and thus resembles Moses against whom Pharaoh's heart had hardened.[64] Moses is part of a long list of biblical figures, including John the Baptist and Peter and Paul, as examples of holy men who suffered for their resistance to secular authority[65] and as examples for holy men who retreat from the world.[66]

Comparison with Moses could climax in a complete identification with this Old Testament figure, when someone is called 'new Moses' or 'our Moses'. It is important to note that in this particular form and with one notable exception that will be discussed below, this laudatory epithet is in the fourth and fifth centuries only applied to bishops. The Gothic bishop Ulfilas, according to the Arian church historian Philostorgius, was held in such esteem by the Emperor Constantine that he called him 'a Moses of our times'.[67] Gregory the Wonderworker, bishop of Neocaesarea in Pontus, is praised as 'a Moses in our times' by Gregory of Nyssa in his *Life* of the saint,[68] a comparison that introduces a detailed *comparatio* of the saintly bishop with the patriarch of the Hebrews. Jacob, the later bishop of Nisibis, is called a 'new Moses' by Theodoret of Cyrrhus.[69] Also in the mid fifth century, Pope Sixtus is addressed as 'new Moses' in a letter by two eastern bishops.[70]

Historia religiosa, he invokes divine assistance for his task, the same assistance that also came to the succour of Moses when he wrote the Pentateuch (*HR* 1.1, I 161–3 Canivet and Leroy-Molinghen; 12 trans. Price).

64 Palladius, *Dialogus* 9.38 (II 192 Malingrey; 61 trans. Meyer).

65 Ibid. 18.225 (368 Malingrey; 122 trans. Meyer).

66 Ibid. 19.133 (388 Malingrey; 129 trans. Meyer).

67 Philostorgius, *Historia ecclesiastica* 2.5 (18.12–13 ed. J. Bidez, 3rd ed. rev. F. Winkelmann (Berlin, 1981)).

68 Gregory of Nyssa, *De vita Gregorii thaumaturgi* (*PG* 46.908c); also 949a: Gregory resembles Moses in prayer.

69 Theodoret, *HR* 1.5 (I 168 Canivet and Leroy-Molinghen; 14 trans. Price).

70 *Xysti III papae epistolae et decreta, Ep.* 4 (*PL* 50. 595a).

This survey of juxtapositions of saintly men with Moses, which could undoubtedly be augmented by further examples, reveals a pronounced preference among the Greek authors of the fourth and fifth centuries to regard Moses as the prototype specifically of the Christian bishop.

The Emperor Constantine as Moses

It is at this juncture that we must consider the writings of Eusebius of Caesarea, who was the first author to celebrate the Emperor Constantine for his support of the Christian religion. The biblical model of Moses provides Eusebius with a worthy *exemplum* for his beloved emperor. In his *Life of Constantine*, he draws frequent parallels between Moses and Constantine at the crucial moments in the emperor's life—birth and youth, succession to the throne, struggle against adversaries, and the context of his last, fatal illness. In the introduction to his work, he boasts that Constantine surpassed all Roman emperors before him because he was the only one to become a 'friend of God'—a reminiscence of Moses (Exod. 33.11).[71] He then begins his narrative by referring to the ancient tale which, he says, to some may seem merely a myth, of Moses spending his youth in the midst of his enemies, the Egyptians, who adhered to different beliefs from his own.[72] But, Eusebius continues, the same God of Moses allowed the present generation to witness even greater marvels in the person of Constantine, who was also brought up among tyrants and enemies of God, but nonetheless from his earliest youth led a life pleasing to God.[73] The Moses motif is repeated later when Eusebius describes how Constantine made haste to visit his father on his deathbed in York, after a narrow escape from a plot by his enemies at the court of Diocletian, 'imitating the great prophet Moses'.[74] The comparison with Moses is invoked again, and this time more elaborately, in connection with the decisive battle at the Milvian Bridge which would establish Constantine as emperor of the West: God came to the aid and protection of Constantine just as he did when Moses

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[71] Eusebius, *VC* 1.3.4 (16.31–17.1 Winkelmann; 482 trans. Richardson).
[72] Ibid. 1.12.1–2 (21.3–22 Winkelmann; 485 trans. Richardson).
[73] Ibid. 1.19.1 (25.18–20 Winkelmann; 487 trans. Richardson).
[74] Ibid. 1.20.2 (26.13–14 Winkelmann; 488 trans. Richardson).

led his people out of Egypt. After his victory over Maxentius, Constantine led his troops in triumphant psalmody, just as the Hebrews had broken out into chants of thanksgiving after defeating Pharaoh.[75] The last hurdle on Constantine's path to rulership over the entire Roman empire is also described in analogy with Moses: during his campaign against the eastern emperor Licinius, Constantine again followed Old Testament example. He pitched his 'tent' (*skene*) at some distance from his soldiers, held a fast and sent fervent prayers to God, thus imitating Moses when he first set up the tabernacle. It is significant that Eusebius here uses the same word for Constantine's 'tent' as the Septuagint does for the tabernacle of Moses.[76] This 'tent' is mentioned once again in the description of Constantine's preparations for a campaign against Persia, which, however, he did not live to realize. The exact words of this passage do not survive, due to a lacuna in the text, but the relevant chapter-heading included in the ancient Table of Contents specifies that this 'tent' had the shape of a church,[77] a further allusion to the tabernacle of Moses. This was to be Constantine's last political action, for soon afterwards, he succumbed to an illness and died. The comparison of Constantine with Moses is thus almost a leitmotiv in Eusebius' *Life of Constantine.* Yet, the church historians of the fifth century seem reluctant to pick up this theme.[78] The only author to apply the Moses comparison in his account of Constantine's reign is Socrates. But rather than exploring the analogy of the Crossing of the Red Sea and the Battle at the Milvian Bridge, Socrates chooses to repeat Eusebius' assertion about Constantine's construction of a church-like 'tent'.[79]

Moses is the perfect *exemplum* for Eusebius' portrait of Constantine because Moses stands in a privileged relation with God, and

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[75] Ibid. 1.38.2–5 (34.21–35.21 Winkelmann; 493 trans. Richardson). Eusebius exploits the comparison with Moses leading the Israelites through the Red Sea already in the description of this battle in his *Church History* 9.5–8 (II 828.22–830.21 ed. E. Schwartz (Leipzig, 1908); 292–4 trans. G.A. Williamson (Harmondsworth, 1989)).

[76] Eusebius, *VC* 2.12.1 (53.14–18 Winkelmann; 503 trans. Richardson). Cf. Exod. 33.7.

[77] Ibid. 4.56 (144 Winkelmann; 555 trans. Richardson); cf. the Table of Contents at the beginning of the work (13.3 Winkelmann; 478 trans. Richardson).

[78] E. Ewig, 'Das Bild Constantins des Großen in den ersten Jahrhunderten des abendländischen Mittelalters', *Historisches Jahrbuch* 75 (1955) 1–46 (repr. in *Das byzantinische Herrscherbild*, ed. H. Hunger, Darmstadt, 1975).

[79] Socrates, *HE* 1.18.12 (59.17–60.3 Hansen; 22 trans. Zenos).

his leadership is at once political and religious.[80] The religious aspect of Constantine's rule is further explored in the *Life of Constantine* through frequent discussion of the emperor's special role with regard to the Church which was under his protection and tutelage. On two occasions, Eusebius even refers to the emperor as a 'bishop' (*episkopos*): Constantine convened synods of people of differing opinions and from different countries, 'like some shared bishop constituted by God'.[81] Later in the text, Eusebius dwells on Constantine's service to God and his personal piety. Hence, he continues, the emperor was fully justified when he once addressed a number of bishops he was entertaining in the following way: 'You are bishops whose jurisdiction is within the Church: I also am a bishop, ordained by God to overlook whatever is external to the Church'. This is confirmed by his deeds, Eusebius goes on to say, since Constantine did indeed act as an overseer (*epeskopei*) to all his subjects, encouraging them to lead a pious life through various measures, such as the prohibition of sacrifice and bloody games.[82]

Much ink has been spilled about these passages which are crucial to our understanding of the first formulation of Christian imperial ideology and its heritage in the Byzantine empire.[83] It is sufficient to note here that Eusebius does not appear to claim that Constantine occupied the ecclesiastical office of a bishop, but rather that his actions were those appropriate for an 'overseer' (the Greek word *episkopos* comes from the verb *episkopein*, 'to oversee') of ecclesiastical affairs. Eusebius' designations of Constantine as *episkopos* are always carefully set in the context of the emperor's concrete measures fostering the cause of the Christian Church, as befits the religious leader of his people. It would be facile to mistake Eusebius' references to Constantine as *episkopos* for 'caesaropapism' in

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[80] Such a connection was already suspected by T.D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981) 271. See also C. Rapp, 'Imperial Ideology in the Making: Eusebius of Caesarea on Constantine as "bishop"', *JTS* (forthcoming).

[81] Eusebius, *VC* 1.44.1 (38.27 Winkelmann; 494 trans. Richardson) οἷά τις κοινὸς ἐπίσκοπος ἐκ θεοῦ καθεστάμενος.

[82] Ibid. 4.24 (128.21–4 Winkelmann; 546 trans. Richardson) 'ἀλλ' ὑμεῖς μὲν τῶν εἴσω τῆς ἐκκλησίας, ἐγὼ δὲ τῶν ἐκτὸς ὑπὸ θεοῦ καθεστάμενος ἐπίσκοπος ἂν εἴην.' ἀκόλουθα δὲ τῷ λόγῳ διανοούμενος τοὺς ἀρχομένους ἅπαντας ἐπεσκόπει, προὔτρεπέ τε ὅσηπερ ἂν ἡ δύναμις τὸν εὐσεβῆ μεταδιώκειν βίον.

[83] For references to the earlier literature see D. de Decker, G. Dupuis-Masay, 'L' "épiscopat" de l'empereur Constantin', *Byzantion* 50 (1980) 118—57 and J.-M. Sansterre, 'Eusèbe de Césarée et la naissance de la théorie "césaropapiste"', *Byzantion* 42 (1972) 131–95. See also Dagron 1996, 145–7.

the making. In view of the findings of the present study, I would submit instead that there is a significant and intrinsic connection between Eusebius' predilection for setting Constantine in relation to Moses and the passages referring to Constantine's function as *episkopos* of the Church. Just as religious and political leadership are inseparable in Moses, who is the biblical model *par excellence* for the late-antique bishop, both aspects are also united in Constantine whose role can thus justifiably be said to parallel that of a bishop.

In the imperial ideology of the generations after Eusebius, the model of Moses seems to be overshadowed by comparisons of the emperor with David. Severus of Antioch in the mid fifth century is probably the earliest author to evoke the figure of David as he refers to certain actions of the emperors Constantine, Honorius, and Gratian, but he refrains from establishing an explicit comparison between them.[84] The first emperor to be equated with David was Marcian. At the Council of Chalcedon in 451, he was acclaimed by the assembled clergymen as 'new Constantine, new Paul, new David'.[85] Several decades later, Constantine the Great is referred to as 'father and patriarch of all Christian kings, who was in truth chosen and a new David' in the *Life of Peter the Iberian*, the Monophysite bishop of Maiumas in Palestine.[86]

The increasing application of the David imagery, however, did not result in completely obscuring Moses as a literary model for emperors. The reign of Heraclius in the seventh century and the work of his court poet, George of Pisidia, may be seen as evidence of the coexistence of the two models of Moses and David. The biblical figure of David with its associations of the divine transferral of kingship offered itself as an ideal model for an emperor like Heraclius who had gained the throne through usurpation and who departed from the Roman imperial tradition by introducing into the official titulature the designation of *basileus*, with all its biblical and oriental connotations.[87] But George of Pisidia also draws

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[84] E.W. Brooks, 'James of Edessa. The Hymns of Severus of Antioch and others (II)', *Patrologia Orientalis* VII 5 (Turnhout, 1971) *Hymn* 200 (p.664); *Hymn* 201 (p.665f.); *Hymn* 202 (p.666f.).

[85] J.D. Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, 31 vols. (Florence, 1759–98) VII 169.

[86] R. Raabe, *Petrus der Iberer. Ein Charakterbild zur Kirchen- und Sittengeschichte des fünften Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig, 1895) 40.

[87] C. Ludwig, 'Kaiser Herakleios, Georgios Pisides und die Perserkriege' in *Poikila Byzantina* XI, *Varia* III (Bonn, 1991) *passim*.

comparisons with Moses. Most significant is the fact that these comparisons are applied to the emperor and to the Patriarch Sergius alike: Heraclius sets out, in imitation of Moses, on his Persian campaign against the 'second Pharaoh';[88] and becomes a 'second Moses' by arming himself with piety against the enemy.[89] In much the same way, the Patriarch Sergius becomes a 'new Moses' as he repels the siege of Constantinople in 626 by the 'second Pharaoh,' the khagan of the Avars.[90] The patriarch also equals Moses in sending voiceless prayers to God.[91] To George of Pisidia as much as to Eusebius three centuries before him, Moses was the prototypical leadership figure whose role embraced both the religious and the political sphere.

Even in the imperial rhetoric of later centuries, comparisons with Moses were not entirely abandoned. An anonymous treatise entitled *On the Eight Parts of the Rhetorical Speech*, which dates from the tenth century or later,[92] deals with Moses' leadership role with regard to his people. The section about praise (*encomium*) and invective (*psogos*) explains the proper application of *comparatio* with the men of old or of great reputation, and suggests comparisons between Demosthenes and Thucydides, or between Hector and Achilles. The emperor, the treatise continues, may be compared to David, who was also a *basileus*, or to Moses or to Joshua the son of Nun who were generals. The patriarch may be compared to Aaron as arch-priest, or to Moses as leader of the people and God's helper.[93] In the advice of this anonymous rhetorician, then, Moses

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[88] George of Pisidia, *Expeditio Persica* 1.135–6 (90 Pertusi). M. Whitby, 'A New Image for a New Age: George of Pisidia on the Emperor Heraclius' in *The Roman and Byzantine Army in the East*, ed. E. Dabrowa (Cracow, 1994) analyses the use of *synkrisis* by George of Pisidia, with special attention (213–21) to the comparisons with Moses.

[89] George of Pisidia, *Expeditio Persica* 3.415–17 (134 Pertusi).

[90] George of Pisidia, *Bellum Avaricum* 495–8 (198 Pertusi).

[91] George of Pisidia, *Hexaemeron* 1874 (*PG* 92.1576b). Patriarch Sergius is also applauded as 'our Moses' in George of Pisidia's prose encomium on Saint Anastasius (I 203.8 ed B. Flusin, *Saint Anastase le Perse et l'histoire de la Palestine au début du VIIe siècle* (Paris, 1992)).

[92] In assigning this date to the text, I base myself on G.L. Kustas, *Studies in Byzantine Rhetoric*, Analekta Blatadon 17 (Thessalonike, 1973) 25 n.1, who explains that Christian examples were not incorporated into school texts before the tenth century.

[93] 'Ανωνύμου περὶ τῶν ὀκτὼ μερῶν τοῦ ῥητορικοῦ λόγου (III 599.17–26, ed. Ch. Walz, *Rhetores Graeci* (Stuttgart and Tübingen, 1834). The manuscript which contains this text, *Paris gr.* 2918, dates from the 14th century.

can serve as the perfect model for an emperor as well as a Christian patriarch or bishop.

If a conclusion, however tentative, is to be drawn from the present study, it may be this: the public role of the saint or the bishop on the one hand, and the religious role of the emperor, on the other, are depicted in the literature of the fourth and fifth centuries by an approximation of the two. This is achieved through their rhetorical juxtaposition with selected biblical models in the form of *exemplum* or *comparatio*. Constantine's patronage of Christianity fostered new reflections both on the role of the Church and its representatives, as well as on the character of imperial rule. The uncertainty that Christian authors must have felt when faced with the difficulty of giving definition to the nature of imperial and ecclesiastical leadership is reflected in their preference for Moses as the biblical *exemplum* that could be applied to emperors, bishops and saints with equal justification.

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CHAPTER TWELVE

VICE AND ADVICE IN SOCRATES AND SOZOMEN

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Introduction

In the mid fifth century, two laymen, Socrates and Sozomen, wrote church histories in Constantinople.[1] Both works are in Greek and both cover the period from Constantine to Theodosius II. The number of similarities between the two texts suggests that Sozomen was familiar with Socrates' history.[2] Some have even accused Sozomen of being little more than a plagiarist, but it seems to me that he should not be dismissed in this way. There are substantial differences between the two historians and one of these lies in where they place their praise and blame.

In this article I examine both the form and content of panegyrical writing in the two church histories. First, I look at how far they conform to conventions of panegyric in their descriptions of prominent individuals; then I focus on the descriptions to see which virtues are being highlighted. My title is not simply chosen for the rhyme but refers to the less obvious uses of panegyric. Panegyric can perform at least three functions: flattery is the most obvious, given that a speech in praise of someone easily veers into

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[1] It used to be thought that they were both lawyers. Sozomen was, but there is no evidence that Socrates was. See Urbainczyk 1997a, 13–14. Theodoret's name is often linked with those of Socrates and Sozomen since he also wrote a church history in Greek at this time. I have not included him in this study because the result would be a book rather than an article. His work is markedly different from the other two histories and deserves special study which I hope to complete soon.

[2] It seems almost certain that it is this way round, not that Socrates was using the work of Sozomen, because of a comparison between two particular passages, that is Socrates 1.10 and Sozomen 1.22, which deal with the meeting of Constantine and the Novatian bishop Acesius. Socrates says explicitly that no one ever mentioned this story before, whereas Sozomen simply introduces the same anecdote with 'it is said' (λέγεται).

flattery. However as well as this, it can also be understood in some cases to contain criticism, since by praising certain virtues in one ruler the speaker may be drawing attention to the lack of these virtues in another. Or, by praising certain virtues, the speaker may be commenting implicitly on the lack of other virtues in the honorand, since the standard qualities were so well known that omissions would be noted. This function is observed more easily in history where *implicit* comparisons may be drawn between emperors of the past and present.[3] A historian's description of the past may contain criticism of the present. Thirdly, there may be advice contained in a panegyric; the speaker may be encouraging the recipient to practise the virtues for which he is being praised.[4] So panegyric can be prescriptive as well as descriptive. The same is true of history to some extent. When Ammianus praises Valentinian for his religious tolerance, he could be seen as criticizing the emperor in whose reign he was writing, the famously intolerant Theodosius I, but he could also be seen as trying to encourage a different attitude in his ruler (30.9.5).

History writing, not just in the ancient world, involves judgement, although perhaps modern historians are rather less ready to admit this. In ancient historiography there was often an explicit acknowledgement that the recording of history would leave models of behaviour for future generations to copy or avoid. The idea that history is useful is largely based on this.[5] If history was seen as providing lessons for the present, then it is unsurprising that some historians employed the conventions of panegyric to make their point more strongly. This continued into late antiquity. Sabine MacCormack argues that because the traditional aspects praised by panegyrists were imperial military success and the

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[3] Suetonius, *Life of Augustus* 53 describes how Augustus was angered by the use of the term *dominus* ('master') to address him. Only slaves called their masters this. Readers were surely meant to think of Domitian who styled himself *dominus et deus* ('master and god'). Audiences/readers would be in the habit of making connections since explicit comparisons are a very important part of panegyric, as Menander Rhetor (377) makes clear.

[4] Wallace-Hadrill 1983, 145–49 on virtues in public life. He points out that the virtues Suetonius praises are clemency, civility, liberality, and restraint from luxury and lust (152) and that these are the virtues most appreciated in an emperor by the upper classes (157).

[5] E.g. Thucydides 1.22.4, Dionysius of Halicarnassus 1.6.3–4, Livy praef. 10. For further examples and a discussion of *exempla* in history being a guide to behaviour see Blockley 1975, 162.

warlike virtues of the emperor, Christians tended to avoid the use of panegyric and no tradition of Christian panegyric developed.[6] While this may be true in terms of actual speeches being written, Christians did not forget the useful techniques at their disposal to portray a hero. Gregory of Nyssa' encomium of his brother Basil is a perfect example of Christian panegyric.[7] Indeed one might expect church historians to employ panegyrical forms more than classical writers since their sympathies are more openly acknowledged than those of classical historians: orthodoxy is to be praised, heresy and paganism attacked.

Lucian complains that his contemporaries were writing bad history because they did not realize the difference between panegyric and history (*How to write history* 4–7). History is to be useful. Only the truth is useful, therefore history must be truthful (9). The reason people write bad history is that they are trying to make their work more pleasing by including eulogy. In fact intelligent readers will not find eulogy in a history pleasing because they want the truth. The implication behind all his comments is that would-be historians are pandering to the mob and including encomia in their attempts to make their work more pleasing (10).[8] A historian, says Lucian, should call a fig a fig (41).[9] Cicero, known for his oratory not his history, says that the orator should encourage good and discourage evil. He is eloquent about history—it is the witness of the ages, the light of truth, the life of memory, the guide to life and the messenger of antiquity. But, it needs the voice of an orator to give it immortality (*De oratore* 2.36). That is, the historian needs the orator's skill to write well.

Apart from trying to keep their readers entertained, historians might be tempted to veer into eulogy for more political reasons. They themselves commented on the obvious problems of writing about their own day.[10] History demanded truth whereas diplomacy, cowardice or flattery might demand a certain economy here.[11]

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[6] 1975, 166–73.

[7] See Kennedy 1980, 143–5.

[8] At ch.7 he had described the difference between panegyric and history as not a narrow isthmus but a mighty wall.

[9] Lucian *is* making a joke here, but he is not saying that the historian should be a sycophants, as the word συκοφάντης meant only 'slanderer' or 'backbiter' see LSJ s.v.

[10] E.g. Livy, praef. 5.

[11] Brunt 1993, 181–209 on Cicero and the importance of truth for history, *pace* Woodman 1988, 95–101. Polybius does say that authors should have a

Ammianus refers to the difficulties of writing about events in living memory (preface to Book 26) and appears to allude to these again at the very end of his work:

> Scribant reliqua potiores, aetate et doctrinis florentes. Quos id (si libuerit) aggressuros, procudere linguas ad maiores moneo stilos.
> (31.16.9)
>
> Let better qualified men, in the prime of life and learning, write the rest. I advise them, if they wish to undertake this, to fashion their language in a superior style.

MacCormack argues that *stilus maior* in late antiquity was a special term for panegyric.[12] Ammianus would then be saying that when one comes so close to one's own day, to the reign of the present emperor, a writer is almost compelled to write panegyric not history.[13] Both Socrates and Sozomen include the emperor of their own day, Theodosius II, in their histories and so I wish to examine their treatment of him first. The other individuals to be discussed are Constantine, Julian, and John Chrysostom; three emperors and one bishop. I have chosen these because both Socrates and Sozomen deal with them at some length. It may seem unusual to include Julian here but the same techniques used to produce praise can also be turned to the opposite use, invective.[14]

Theodosius II

The emperor Theodosius II reigned from 408 to 450. All the evidence points to him being alive when the two church historians wrote their work.[15] Book Seven of Socrates' *Ecclesiastical History* covers the reign of this emperor and this is how the historian described him:

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partiality for their own country but adds that they should not tell lies about it (16.14.6). See Cicero's assurances, *Ad Att.* 1.19.10.

[12] 1975, 152–3.

[13] This did not preclude panegyric about the past. It is difficult not to label Ammianus' description of the Emperor Julian (e.g. 16.1) and of the father of Theodosius I (27.3, 27.8) as panegyric.

[14] Nixon and Rodgers 1 on the origin of the term 'panegyric', and Russell in this volume.

[15] See Valesius' comments on Socrates 1.10.1, reproduced in Hussey 1853, 50. See also Urbainczyk 1997a, 13–39. On the reasons for Sozomen rewriting Socrates, Urbainczyk 1997b.

ἐγὼ δὲ οὔτε βασιλεῖ γνωρισθῆναι σπουδάζων οὔτε λόγων ἐπίδειξιν ποιήσασθαι βουλόμενος, αὐτὰ ψιλὰ μετὰ τῆς ἀληθείας τὰ προσόντα καλὰ τῷ βασιλεῖ ἀπομνημονεῦσαι προῄρημαι, ἐπεὶ καὶ τὸ σιγῆσαι αὐτὰ οὕτως ὄντα χρηστὰ ζημίαν κρίνω μὴ γνωσθέντα τοῖς μεθ' ἡμᾶς.
(7.22.1)

Although I am not eager to become known to the emperor, nor do I wish to make a display of words, I have preferred to relate the fine qualities of the emperor simply and truthfully, since I judge it a loss, when these are so useful, to be silent so that they are not known to those who come after us.

Socrates carries on to list the emperor's virtues. He describes his piety and learning, and the efficacy of his prayers by which he not only stopped snow falling but also won battles.

Before the start of Sozomen's history, there is a separate chapter. This is Sozomen's address to the emperor in which he dedicates his work to him in these terms:

μέγιστον δὲ καὶ βασιλικὸν ἐνομίζετο ταυτησί τῆς δημώδους ἀρετῆς μόριον ἕν κεκτῆσθαι τὸν πάντων ἡγούμενον, εὐσεβείας δέ, τοῦ ἀληθοῦς κόσμου τῆς βασιλείας, οὐδενὶ τοσοῦτος λόγος ἐγένετο. σὺ δέ, ὦ κράτιστε βασιλεῦ Θεοδόσιε, συλλήβδην εἰπεῖν πᾶσαν ἐπήσκησας ἀρετὴν διὰ θεοῦ. (address 2–3)

It used to be thought most important and imperial that the ruler of the world possessed one part of this popular virtue, but there was no such great value attached to piety, which is the true adornment of majesty. You, O most powerful Emperor Theodosius, to sum up, you have through God cultivated every virtue.

Sozomen goes on to compliment the emperor on his virtues, wisdom and patronage of fine writing. Because of all these qualities he dedicates his history to Theodosius and asks him to edit it as he thinks fit. Few would hesitate to label these passages eulogistic and further examination of the histories confirms this view.

Socrates' first chapter on Theodosius (7.22) is brief but contains many elements characteristic of panegyric. The previous chapter had mentioned eulogies of the emperor (7.21.7, 7.21.10) and we may interpret this as a warning that we are about to read one. He stresses the truth of what he is about to write (7.22.1) and says it would be wrong not to record the emperor's virtues. He gives a brief account of Theodosius' life and says he was born and brought up to be the emperor but was not corrupted by this. He was φρόνιμος ('wise', 7.22.2), καρτερικός ('patient', 7.22.3), his palace was like a monastery, he was learned, a greater collector of books than

Ptolemy Philadelphus, and surpassed all others in forbearance and clemency (τὸ ἀνεξίκακον[16] καὶ φιλάνθρωπον πάντας ἀνθρώπους ὑπερηκόντισεν, 7.22.6). He was more of a philosopher than Julian. Socrates gives an account of his mercy and then of his piety (7.22.13). He stopped a snowstorm and won battles by prayer (he is compared to David) and his war against the recent usurper is compared to Moses crossing the Red Sea.[17] Such comparisons, which are a regular feature of panegyric, can only serve to emphasize Theodosius' piety.

Socrates has only two chapters specifically about Theodosius and the second is much shorter. The latter simply mentions the emperor's piety (7.42); he was the equal of clergy and never approved of any persecution. Socrates even says that he surpassed true priests in meekness (τῇ πραότητι[18] καὶ πάντας τοὺς ἀληθῶς ἱερωμένους ἐνίκα, 7.42.2). The historian should also perhaps be given credit for his ingenuity since he managed to bring in a major panegyrical topic, that of military achievement. Theodosius II was so meek that he won battles without any battles being fought—because God rewarded him for his meekness. Socrates adds unnecessarily that he writes these things not from flattery (καὶ οὐ κολακείᾳ) but because they are true. So we see the standard features of panegyric being employed here by Socrates; the emperor possesses φρόνησις, καρτερία, ἀνεξικακία, φιλανθρωπία, εὐσεβία ('wisdom', 'patience', 'forbearance', 'clemency' and 'piety'); he has control of natural phenomena and is victorious in battle.

By contrast, Sozomen's address is different in that it is not part of his actual history but stands alone. As an address to the emperor, in which the ruler is spoken to directly, the panegyrical aspects are more predictable and thus less potent. No one would expect anything other than praise in such a piece of writing although the fact of writing it at all, and at such length, is not insignificant. Standard features appear here too. Sozomen starts by comparing Theodosius favourably with previous emperors. Theodosius cultivates every virtue especially piety and philanthropy. Sozomen goes

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16 ἀνεξικακία ('forbearance', 'patient endurance') is a Christian virtue and thus becomes an important concept in Christian works, cf. LSJ and *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, ed. G.W.H. Lampe (Oxford, 1961) s.v.

17 Eusebius also compared Constantine to Moses in his *Life of Constantine* 1.12, 20, 38 and at *Ecclesiastical History* 9.9.5–9. See Rapp in this volume.

18 πραότης is described as a virtue especially pleasing to God by John Chrysostom (*Hom* 61.1 *in Joh*).

on to say that many may write about Theodosius and his deeds but the emperor is not swayed by artificial sound or form (κομψῇ τινι φωνῇ καὶ σχήματι)—*he* has sound judgement. He knows what constitutes good speaking and rewards its practitioners more than anyone else, it seems; Sozomen here includes elaborate comparisons (address 5–6).

Theodosius, says Sozomen, surpasses all the ancients in generosity with regard to learning (σὺ δέ, ὦ βασιλεῦ, οὐδενὶ τῶν πώποτε ὑπερβολὴν κατέλιπες ἐν ταῖς περὶ τοὺς λόγους φιλοτιμίαις) and he has fine discrimination. Sozomen describes him as φιλάνθρωπος ('merciful') and πρᾶος ('meek') and observes that he imitates God in these qualities. He says that the emperor is as learned as Solomon but more virtuous because he is able to conquer the passions of the soul and body. His rule is unstained and free from murder, and he is a good example to his subjects. For all these reasons, concludes Sozomen, he dedicates his history to him and asks him to edit his work. There is no account of the emperor's upbringing or birth, but there is an extended treatment of his virtues. Sozomen several times says that Theodosius possesses all the virtues but he stresses piety and learning; he has a good relationship with God and so his affairs go well; he also has a good relationship with his subjects because he is so virtuous.

Despite Sozomen's declaration at the end of the address that the ninth book of his work would be about the glorious reign of Theodosius II, the emperor does not feature in the history. Book Nine is much shorter than the rest and it would appear to be unfinished. Sozomen would have written more effective eulogy, and been more open to the charge of flattery, if the panegyrical tone had continued in the body of the history, instead of being confined to the address. It is worth examining the language of this address. Sozomen spends most time discussing the love of learning shown by this emperor. He had started by stressing piety (see passage quoted earlier) and at the start of a church history, one might have expected this emphasis to be developed. In fact, however, learning is stressed. One might wish to interpret this as advice or encouragement. It is clearly in writers' interests to encourage a respect for learning and letters in their rulers. The reader is left with the impression that the aspect of Theodosius II's character for which Sozomen is most grateful—or perhaps would most like to see—is his appreciation of letters.

By this very noticeable emphasis on learning and good judgement, Sozomen's request to the emperor to edit his work is less shocking.[19] If the emperor is very learned, who better to read one's work and offer improvements? It seems unlikely that Sozomen is writing on the request of the emperor or he would have mentioned it in his address. It is noticeable that he does not say that the emperor asked him to write his work. It would seem to me that since *his* history presents emperors in a worse light than Socrates' had, but bishops in a far better one, the address may in fact be an attempt to mollify the court.

Socrates' eulogy of Theodosius II appears to be more fitting to a church history in that the virtue he focuses on is piety. The emperor even wins battles by his piety. More strikingly, the emperor is not only pious but is an equal of true priests (καὶ γὰρ αὐτὸς τοῖς ἀληθῶς ἱερωμένοις ἐφάμιλλος ἦν, 7.42.1) and in the following sentence is described as surpassing *all* true priests in meekness. (7.42.2, quoted earlier. The phrase 'true priests' is used in both passages.) Although both historians use the form and conventions of panegyric when dealing with the delicate (because contemporary) subject of Theodosius II, the content of their panegyric is different. Sozomen stresses learning, Socrates piety.

Constantine

Both historians start their work with the reign of Constantine. Sozomen had written an epitome of events from the time of Christ to the deposition of Licinius (which is no longer extant) but starts his history proper with Constantine (1.1.12). Socrates says explicitly that he is continuing the history of Eusebius and says the latter wrote:

> τῶν ἐπαίνων τοῦ βασιλέως καὶ τῆς πανηγυρικῆς ὑψηγορίας τῶν λόγων μᾶλλον ὡς ἐν ἐγκωμίῳ φροντίσας ἤπερ τοῦ ἀκριβῶς περιλαβεῖν τὰ γενόμενα. (1.1.2)
>
> having more concern for praise of the emperor and a lofty panegyrical style as befitted an encomium than for accurately presenting what happened.

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19 Janson 1964, 141–3 and Simon 1959/60, 125–9 on this practice.

This is why he, Socrates, is starting from this point. Eusebius in his history did not cover the reign of Constantine in detail but did write a *Life of Constantine* to which Socrates is referring.[20]

Socrates' account is relatively short. He gives details of Constantine's conversion (1.2), his building programme in Byzantium, refounded as Constantinople (1.16), the pilgrimage of Helena, the emperor's mother (1.17), his fight against paganism (1.18), and his death and funeral (1.39–40). A large part of Book One is taken up with the Arian dispute and the Council of Nicaea in which Constantine plays a significant part. Socrates says the emperor was grieved by the trouble in the Church (1.7.1) and tried to resolve the conflict by writing to the disputants. He called the Council because he saw the Church divided (1.8.4). Socrates describes the advice given by the emperor as 'admirable and full of wisdom' (τοιαῦτα μὲν οὖν θαυμαστὰ καὶ σοφίας μεστά, 1.8.1) and he transcribes the imperial letters.[21] The emperor wrote to Arius and Athanasius (1.25 and 1.27) and Socrates says:

> ταῦτα ἔγραφεν ὁ βασιλεὺς τοῦ λυσιτελοῦντος γινόμενος καὶ μὴ βουλόμενος τὴν ἐκκλησίαν διασπᾶσθαι. τοὺς γὰρ πάντας ἐπὶ τὴν ὁμόνοιαν ἄγειν ἐσπούδαζεν. (1.27.5)
>
> The emperor wrote these things being concerned with what was advantageous and not wishing the Church to be torn apart; for he was keen to bring them all into agreement.

Even when Constantine turned against Athanasius, the great orthodox hero, Socrates reports that some thought the emperor came to this decision in order to establish unity in the Church (1.35.4). Socrates' account is not as obvious a panegyric as Eusebius' *Life of Constantine* is. The emperor *is* portrayed favourably but for the most part, Socrates simply describes Constantine doing his best to establish unity in the Church.

Sozomen's account is longer. He enlarges on aspects mentioned by Socrates, such as Constantine's building programme (cf. Socrates 1.16 and Sozomen 2.3, 2.26) and introduces new details (e.g. benefits to the Church and clergy 1.6, 1.8, 1.9, 2.32). Sozomen is also concerned to give his readers models of piety to emulate and

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[20] Eusebius himself recognizes that his *Life of Constantine* is concerned with praise (*VC* 1.11). Barnes (1989, 94–123, esp. 114) suggests that this work originated as a continuation of the *Ecclesiastical History*.

[21] One letter in 1.7, six in 1.9, and Socrates mentions others written by the emperor, 1.9.64.

there are a number of accounts of holy individuals.[22] Sozomen describes the Arian dispute and the Council of Nicaea (1.15 to the end of Book One) but not at such length as Socrates and he does not include the Creed. He said he had been going to quote it but had been advised by friends that it might fall into the hands of the uninitiated (1.20.3). He does not quote any of the imperial letters included by Socrates.[23]

There are enough differences between the two historians to dismiss the charge of plagiarism on the part of Sozomen. Sozomen did include material similar to that in Socrates' work but he was concerned to make important changes. I would argue that the changes represent the Church in a more positive light and give the emperor a less important role. If this is the case, then his addition of a chapter about Constantine's son Crispus is striking. Sozomen says that Constantine did not convert because he wanted purification after the death of Crispus. It is true that Sozomen may be answering objections raised after Socrates' work was published, but he also introduces into the mind of the reader the idea that Constantine was a murderer. He does not dispute this but is only interested in discussing Constantine's motivation for conversion (1.5). The addition of the detail that Constantine's father was nice to Christians might also be seen as detracting from Constantine (1.6). Perhaps the most striking difference, in which Sozomen clearly has Socrates' account in mind, is his description of Constantine's funeral. Socrates had merely remarked that bishops and emperors were buried together in the Church of the Apostles (1.40). Sozomen observes pointedly that in holy places bishops have precedence over emperors (2.34).[24] This contradicts Eusebius' description of Constantine's funeral where Constantine seems to have precedence not over bishops (who do not feature here), but over the Apostles themselves (*VC* 4.58–60). Sozomen is not criticizing Constantine but rather asserting that bishops have priority over emperors, in case the readers might not have understood this (as they would not!) from the description of the arrangements given

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22 E.g. 1.10–14, 2.12–14.

23 Socrates at the start of Book Two said that in the first edition of his work he had not included them (2.1.5–6).

24 See Mango 1990 on Constantine's burial arrangements. Mango argues that Constantine built only a mausoleum and that it was Constantius who built the church, although Socrates at 1.16 explicitly says that Constantine built the Church of the Apostles, as well as referring to the church at 1.40.

by Eusebius and Socrates. It is, surely, a direct statement that the emperor is not the head of the Church.

The descriptions of Constantine are less obviously panegyrical than those of Theodosius II. Both are less adulatory, tending more to a narration of events. Both, however, present a picture of an emperor who had conferred enormous benefits on the Church and Constantine does fall into the category of a good emperor. He is then, for both historians, a subject for approbation but their focus once again is different. Socrates' account of the Council of Nicaea is extended and detailed and made even lengthier by his inclusion of quoted documents. This event dominates the first book (which deals with Constantine) and the aspect of Constantine which Socrates stresses most is his desire for a united Church and an end to disputes within the Church.

The emphasis in Sozomen is different. He gives less prominence to the Council of Nicaea and more to actual benefits Constantine conferred on the Church. There are details on laws Constantine passed which favoured the Church,[25] utterly lacking in Socrates' account, more information on the fight against paganism and on his new buildings. In other words, Sozomen focuses on the material benefits which Constantine brought the Church, rather than his efforts to achieve church unity, as Socrates does.

One might argue that Sozomen's account is more favourable since he emphasizes results rather than intentions, but one might also examine the possible prescriptive role of panegyric here. This is especially true of anything said about Constantine, since subsequent emperors would tend to model themselves on this first Christian ruler.[26] The emperor is praised for helping the Church to

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[25] See Harries 1986, 45–52. Allen (1990, 265–89) sees Socrates' silence on laws passed against Novatians as a sign of his sympathies for this sect, but one should be cautious about using this as an argument since he very seldom mentions laws at all.

[26] See Magdalino 1994, esp. 3–4. Whitby 1994 argues that it is not until the seventh century that Constantine became an important imperial model. However, as he himself details (89–90), there is evidence from the fourth and early fifth century which shows that emperors *did* want to associate themselves with the first Christian emperor, as indeed one might expect; see also Harries 1994. Themistius compared Jovian, Valens and Theodosius I to Constantine as part of his praise of these emperors, in *Orations* 5.70d, 6.82b–83c, 14.183b–d, 18.221a–223b, discussed by Vanderspoel 1995, 144, 160, 198, 212. Constantine's status was linked to the authority given to the Nicene Creed which the Church was very conscious was drawn up during the reign of Constantine, who had after all summoned the Council (Socrates 4.12.11).

flourish by providing that which is in his power to provide—favourable legal conditions, and state funds for the fight against heretics and pagans, and for building new churches. Sozomen plays down Constantine's role in internal church affairs because such an imperial role is not desirable in his eyes.

In Socrates' history the emphasis is very much on the emperor's role in church affairs and his attempts to prevent destructive arguments. Socrates' very focus on the Council of Nicaea helps underline the divisions within the Church at this time. For Socrates, Constantine is a good emperor because he worked for the unity of the Church.[27] For Sozomen it is because he gives the Church money, to put it very crudely. We can thus see very different role models being presented to Theodosius II in the descriptions of Constantine.

In a church history, it would not be unreasonable to expect the most obviously panegyrical accounts to be applied to men of God, those prominent in the Church because of their position or sanctity or preferably both. Just as emperors dominate the works of classical historians such as Tacitus or Ammianus, one might assume that the most prominent individuals in ecclesiastical histories would be bishops, monks or holy men. Yet the bishop of Constantinople, John Chrysostom, is the only individual of this type to whom a significant amount of space is given by both historians. His episcopate takes up a book in both, just as if he were an emperor.[28]

John Chrysostom

Socrates draws attention to his account of this bishop by giving Book Six a preface (they do not all have them). Here he remarks on his own style and says that he has adopted a simple one so as to be understood by both the educated and the uneducated alike.[29] He says his priority is the truth, although the discovery of this has not been easy because different people give different accounts, a warning perhaps that some will disagree with his narrative. The first chapter gives details of the new emperors, Arcadius and

27 Urbainczyk 1997a, 143–52.

28 Both Socrates and Sozomen divide their work into books which correspond more or less to the reigns of emperors.

29 Gamble 1995, 32–41 on the literary level of early Christian literature.

Honorius (6.1), the next is about the appointment of John as bishop of Constantinople (6.2), which is followed by a description of John's birth and early life (6.3). Socrates explains that he is giving an account of this bishop because he is famous for his writings and the troubles into which he fell, adding that John was more honoured after his death than before it (6.2.12).

If the form of panegyric may be recognized by an account of the birth, family, education, accomplishments and actions according to virtue, and a good relationship with the divine and one's own subjects, friends and enemies, then one can readily identify Socrates' account as panegyric. He gives brief details on John's background and education before commenting on his character. He illustrates these comments with descriptions of his actions and it is here that the term panegyric becomes less appropriate. John's actions are hardly illustrative of virtue—he alienated people (6.4), came into conflict with the clergy and those in public office (6.5), and displayed a lack of mercy in his treatment of Eutropius (6.5).

Eutropius was the chief eunuch at the imperial court and was also a consul. The story is that he had persuaded the emperor to pass a law denying churches the right to provide sanctuary and was the first to break the law when he fell foul of the emperor. Unfortunately for him, he took refuge in John's church and the bishop denounced him. The eunuch was dragged out of the church and beheaded. Later Socrates describes John's actions as well-meant but resulting in tumult and dangers (ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν σκοπὸς 'Ιωάννου ἐδόκει εἶναι χρηστός. σὺν ταραχῇ δὲ καὶ κινδύνοις τὸ τέλος ἐδέξατο, 6.8.5). Socrates had said earlier that this bishop was popular because of his eloquence (6.4) but gives no other reason for any popularity. He does say that John gained in popularity after his deposition (6.16) which, while it does suggest an agreement that the bishop had been harshly treated, nevertheless does not indicate a positive judgement on the character of the bishop.

After describing John's second exile and his replacement by Arsacius (6.18–19), Socrates says that shortly after John's deposition there was a hailstorm, with hail of immense size falling on the capital and its suburbs, and four days later the empress died. Both events, Socrates reports, were said to be signs of God's anger. Socrates however reserves judgement on this. He adds that others thought John's deposition was just (6.19). The emperor, who might be considered to be at fault in this episode is presented positively

and receives the ultimate sign of divine favour, a miracle (6.23).[30] In contrast, Theodoret begins his account of John's misfortunes by saying that as, in other respects, he has high regard for those who wronged the bishop he will omit their names (*HE*.5.34.2–3).

Sozomen's account is more straightforward. He gives more information on John's background and on his eloquence. While acknowledging that he had enemies, he says they were the rich and powerful, and that the bishop enjoyed great popularity with the people. Like Socrates, he describes the bishop's actions, but unlike Socrates, he describes them as resulting in success (8.3). According to him, John governed the Church of Constantinople well and during his episcopate a miracle occurred (8.5, different from Arcadius' miracle in Socrates).

Sozomen also includes the Eutropius story and does repeat the accusations of John's enemies that he was not compassionate. However, Sozomen unlike Socrates, is unequivocal. He lays the blame firmly with Eutropius and says he paid the penalty for his impious plan (depriving the churches of their right to provide sanctuary) and was beheaded. In case the reader is in any doubt, he says that God had promptly punished Eutropius and prosperity was restored to the Church. Instead of John's actions resulting in tumult and dangers, we see them resulting in increased worship and hymn-singing (8.7.6). Sozomen stresses throughout John's popularity, and when it seemed as if his life was in danger he tells us that people did their utmost to protect him, even dying in the attempt (8.21). He also adds that in exile in Armenia he was well loved (8.27).

Another aspect absent in Socrates' account is the intervention of Innocent, the bishop of Rome. Sozomen quotes letters which Innocent wrote to John and to the clergy of Constantinople condemning John's deposition (8.26) and records in the last chapter of the book that Innocent sent a delegation to Honorius and Arcadius to ask them to call a council to hear John's case. Sozomen reports that these clergy were dismissed ignominiously and John was condemned to an even more remote place (8.28). This is the only time Sozomen mentions Arcadius.

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[30] In contrast, Theodoret describes how Theodosius II prayed for forgiveness for his parents, Arcadius and Eudoxia, for their role in John's downfall (*HE* 5.36).

In both historians the account of John Chrysostom is much closer to the form of panegyric than their accounts of emperors. Both describe his early years and education and give a narrative of his life in a way unique to their histories. No other bishop is treated in this biographical way by either historian. Although Socrates and Sozomen divide their works according to the imperial reigns, they do not give similar biographies of emperors, with the exception of Julian.

The amount of detail in the histories about John Chrysostom may reflect their sources. It is likely that lives or encomia were circulated after John's deposition and after his death as part of an attempt, which did eventually succeed, to have John's name rehabilitated. We know from both accounts that the Church was divided after his death and was only reunited once his memory was restored and his body returned to Constantinople (Sozomen 8.23.1–2, Socrates 7.45). It seems likely, therefore, that there was a movement to have John reinstated by his supporters which would probably have consisted in part of the composition and circulation of *Lives* of this bishop, showing how holy and how wronged he was.

Both historians may have used such *Lives* as the framework for their account, but there are distinct differences. Sozomen's includes the usual content of panegyric. John is wise, pious, popular and performs good deeds. Socrates' account is ambivalent at best and critical at worst: John's actions result in tumult and dangers. Socrates, although not writing invective, was a long way from panegyric. One would expect a similarly negative description of the last individual for discussion, the pagan emperor Julian.

Julian

I have included Julian because he is given so much space by both Socrates and Sozomen and at first glance the form used looks like that of panegyric, so is this the reverse of encomium, invective? As the last pagan emperor, one might expect church historians to indulge in some invective. Socrates, as in his introduction to his book on John Chrysostom, prefaces Book Three with remarks on his own style. As in the preface to Book Six, he says that he writes in a humble style, which might not be expected by readers

acquainted with Julian (3.1.3). In both cases before introducing what might be considered panegyric, *stilus maior*, he is perhaps reassuring the reader that this in fact is in a humble style.

True to form, Socrates starts with Julian's birth and upbringing. He was so good at literature that it began to be rumoured that he was capable of ruling the Roman empire, not the most natural consequence of literary study one might think. He was successful as a general, reformed the palace, sat up at night writing speeches for the Senate. Giving speeches to the Senate was clearly futile since this body had lost most of its powers long ago, but Socrates is leaving his readers with the impression that Julian, although misguided, had his heart in the right place. One might have expected that all the actions reported by a church historian would reflect badly on Julian but this expectation is not fulfilled. For example, we hear that Julian orders a church of the Novatians to be rebuilt and he fines the bishop who had had it destroyed (3.11).[31] There are no extreme anti-Christian actions mentioned and the description he gives of Julian's pamphlet to the people of Antioch that 'it left a perpetual stigma on the city and its inhabitants' should surely be read as irony (3.17.9). Socrates says that Julian gave up his original thought which was to avenge himself by deeds (ἔργοις) and instead *wrote* an attack. This is hardly evidence of hostility on Socrates' part towards the emperor.

The most severe criticism made by Socrates seems to be that Julian was not a proper philosopher (3.19). He gives different accounts of the emperor's death and affects not to know the truth, but in summing him up he says that Julian's zeal made him incautious, his learning made him vain and his affectation of clemency exposed him to contempt (3.21.16). There is little biting criticism here: too brave in battle, too concerned with his learning and too well-known for his mercy. These are not vices but traditional virtues, found in panegyric, but here in the wrong proportion.

Sozomen, on the other hand, fulfils one's expectations of a church historian much more satisfactorily. His account starts off

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[31] It should be noted that Socrates would have approved of this protection of Novatians since he did not consider them heretics, cf. n.25. Several times he makes the point that they shared the same beliefs as the orthodox Christians, 2.38.26, 7.25.15–16. His attitude was so favourable that he has been charged with being a Novatian himself, see Urbainczyk 1997a, 26–8, Allen 1990, 266–71.

with bad omens (5.1) and such signs of divine displeasure continue throughout (e.g. 5.2 and 5.21). There are descriptions of Julian's evil deeds (e.g. 5.4) and the sufferings of noble Christians under Julian (e.g. 5.9–11). Julian's death is also presented differently.[32] There is less ambivalence in Sozomen. He discusses who might have killed Julian and suggests it was probably a Christian in Julian's army, and says that tyrannicides have always been heroes. He admits that he does not know definitely who killed Julian but says it is agreed that his death was a result of divine anger (6.2.2) He describes premonitions people had had about Julian's death and observes that:

> ἀμέλει τοι παρὰ πάντα τὸν χρόνον ταυτησὶ τῆς βασιλείας ἀγανακτῶν ὁ θεὸς ἐφαίνετο καὶ παντοδαπαῖς συμφοραῖς ἐν πολλοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἐπέτριψε τὴν Ῥωμαίων ὑπήκοον. (6.2.13)
>
> God showed clearly that he was angry throughout the reign of this emperor and distressed the subjects of the Romans in many provinces by all sorts of disasters.

Again clear differences are visible in the two accounts. Sozomen's inversion of panegyrical techniques is more obvious. The extended treatment of Julian is to highlight his vice, which is not alleviated by any virtue. Socrates is less negative and even includes details which do not reflect badly on the emperor—see, for instance, his account of the death of the bishop of Alexandria, George. Julian did not blame the Christians because George was obnoxious to everyone (Socrates 3.3). Sozomen gives a more grudging version and says even the emperor admitted the Christians were not to blame although, says Sozomen, the emperor would have rather they had been (5.7.8). The impression left from Socrates' history is that Julian was above all learned (3.1.3), or wished very much to be thought learned, and was a patron of literature and philosophy (3.1.55–6). If Sozomen is responding to Socrates' account, it looks very much as if he thought what had been written about Julian was not negative enough.

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[32] Baynes 1955, 271–81 discusses this episode. The article argues that Sozomen neglects to name two saints involved in this because they were Arian.

Conclusion

Why then are there such variations in the two church historians? Is there any underlying reason behind the differences? Socrates praised Theodosius II for piety and meekness, Sozomen for learning. Socrates commends the desire for church unity in Constantine whereas Sozomen focuses on the material benefits to the Church of his reign. John Chrysostom is presented as an intolerant and divisive bishop by Socrates, but as a folk hero, loved by the poor and hated by the rich by Sozomen. Julian is a wicked pagan oppressor in Sozomen but a well-meaning fool in Socrates.

For Socrates a good emperor and a good bishop were both people who worked for church unity. Anyone whose actions split the Church was to be condemned. He saw tolerance as contributing to unity and intolerance as detrimental to it. Given that there was no overall cleric in charge of the Church, the easiest solution to internal disagreements was to allow the emperor to solve the problems, by calling councils and overseeing the outcome. Theodosius II is sold to the reader as pious and meek—a model for clerics—and therefore no one should have any hesitation in allowing him to take the lead in church affairs. Constantine had had the best interests of the Church at heart when he called the Council of Nicaea in an attempt to end dissension. The Emperor Julian, although a pagan, did not persecute Christians, in fact exiled Christians returned in his reign, therefore he did not fall into the category of bad emperor. His intentions were well-meaning. He was just not very intelligent and this was partly manifested by his paganism.

Given that church history tends to be an account of arguments in the Church, bishops who take part in such disputes are generally presented negatively by Socrates. They are standing in the way of unity which is utterly desirable and which is the main concern of most emperors. Good bishops were those who supported the emperors in their attempts at unity. In no sense could John Chrysostom fall into this category. He was extremely divisive and caused a rift in the Church of Constantinople which lasted long after his death.[33]

For Sozomen a good emperor was one who helped the Church, as Constantine did, but who acknowledged the authority of the

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[33] Urbainczyk 1997a, 133–7.

bishops, as he states outright in his account of the funeral of Constantine. Therefore his praise of Theodosius II stresses not his piety but his learning and his respect for good writing. Hence the address is not at all the subservient reverence it seems at first. Julian is very definitely a bad emperor because he is not a Christian and therefore in no way can he be seen as helping the Church. John Chrysostom is a hero because he is independent and upright, popular with the people and therefore powerful. The authority of the Church is increased by the personal popularity of bishops and enhanced by their ability to defy the court. Thus Sozomen's history is much more obviously a church history where Christian is good, heretic and pagan are bad. Socrates' view was too complicated and compromised for Sozomen. It was not church unity which was paramount for him, but doctrinal purity. Confrontation is sometimes preferable to compromise for the Church. In Sozomen's history the techniques of panegyric were more useful than for Socrates. In Socrates' greyer picture the outrageous claims of panegyric were to be avoided. He did not simply praise virtue and condemn vice but instead hoped to persuade bishops and emperors that the less glamorous attribute of tolerance was more useful in the long run. The fact that Sozomen wrote another history so quickly after Socrates may be a sign that the Church knew it was powerful enough not to compromise.[34]

Sozomen's use of panegyric, however, in no way compares with that of Ammianus.[35] In his introductory remarks to Book 16 Ammianus himself remarks that his description of Julian will not fall far short of panegyric (16.1.3) and there is little exaggeration in this remark. In this chapter he carries on to compare Julian with Titus, Trajan, Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius (16.1.4) in the grand tradition of panegyrical *synkrisis*. Even before this introduction we had been warned of Ammianus' attitude—before narrating Julian's exploits in Gaul he draws a parallel with this part of his work and the second half of the *Aeneid*, where Virgil announces that he is embarking on a grander theme.

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[34] I do not wish to claim 'official status' for the histories of Socrates and Sozomen since I am unclear about what that would entail. It is true, however, that generally for a work to survive it has to have the approval of a body of individuals who will ensure that it is copied. See Gamble 1995, 126–7 on the transmission of orthodox and heterodox texts.

[35] MacCormack 1975, 197 n.70. Also Blockley 1975, 73–5 on Ammianus on Julian.

Such adulation of Julian might in itself be unremarkable, but the portraits Ammianus gives of all the other emperors are simply invective. There is a gesture towards fair-mindedness with the good and bad qualities he gives after the death of each ruler but the actual narrative of their reigns in fact presents them as villains.[36] It might seem surprising to note that we still learn our history from Ammianus, although his extant work covers such a short period, only about twenty-five years,[37] not from the church historians.[38] We might wish to argue that the attraction of Ammianus is his vivid and incisive narrative but it may also be true that we, like the readers of Lucian's day, find eulogy, or perhaps invective, more pleasing than history.

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36 Blockley 1975, 37 on the disparity between the post-mortem sketches and the main narrative.

37 From halfway through the reign of Constantius to the death of Valens.

38 As Momigliano observes, 1963, 99.

I would like to thank Andrew Erskine and Mary Whitby for their intelligent comments and suggestions which have improved this article immensely. I say this not to flatter but because it is the truth, of course.

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

EVAGRIUS ON PATRIARCHS AND EMPERORS

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Evagrius, the last of the sequence of late-antique church historians, who extended the narratives of Socrates, Sozomen and Theodoret from their common terminus in the reign of Theodosius II down to his own lifetime in 592, possessed many of the qualifications that were expected of a historian in the ancient world. As a qualified lawyer (*scholasticus*), he was well educated and could compose complex literary Greek; he had experience of public affairs through his employment in the service of Gregory, Patriarch of Antioch, which also gave him access to documents relevant to the doctrinal disputes of previous generations; and he was personally acquainted with a number of other prominent individuals. Furthermore, although we do not have specific information about his parents and grandparents, they were capable of transmitting some information to him.[1]

Passing judgement on events and people was accepted as an integral part of historiography. Agathias, a contemporary of Evagrius, asserted that a history which lacked praise and blame was not much better than women's gossip (*Histories* 1.7.6f.). Evagrius shared this view, and his personal preferences are clear throughout his *History*. It is noticeable that most of his extended appraisals concern people of whom he had fairly direct knowledge: emperors from Justin II through to Maurice, the patriarchs Anastasius and Gregory of Antioch, the eastern commanders Philippicus and Priscus, or imperial envoys such as Domitian of Melitene; from previous generations, only the emperors Zeno and Marcian are accorded a long character sketch. Evagrius also held pronounced views about Justinian, during whose reign he will have pursued

[1] *EH* 3.34, information about relations between the Chalcedonian bishop of Evagrius' native Epiphania and the Monophysite Severus of Antioch.

legal studies in Constantinople, and Anastasius; both these judgements, which emerge from the narrative rather than in a formal assessment, merit discussion, but other leaders receive no more than a brief comment, if that.

Although Evagrius was well placed to observe and analyse contemporaries, the only extended modern treatment of Evagrius as a writer has criticized his individual pen portraits as stereotypes, encomia constructed from tired cardboard clichés, stiff eulogies that catalogue trite virtues and fail to capture the full scope of the recipient's character.[2] More perceptive investigations of the conventions and circumstances of late-antique panegyrics have, however, led to a reassessment of their formulaic character: praise might be couched in standard phrases but this does not entail that it was also devoid of truth, while repetition of views by the same speaker over several years and in different contexts may be a sign of intellectual consistency rather than limited perspectives.[3] The need to be sensitive to the interaction of genuine opinion with literary form has also rightly been urged.[4] Panegyric was a code whose terms had special connotations; they could be combined in diverse ways to reflect the demands of different situations, while the prominence, or absence, of a particular term could well have specific significance for both the author and recipient of the panegyric.[5]

Character assessment of leading public figures tends to revolve around a limited range of formulas which relate to a very few specific qualities, as observers of almost any modern election campaign could corroborate. This narrow focus of public debate may, however, also influence the ways in which prominent individuals present themselves, so that they cultivate qualities which they already know will evoke a favourable response. This was particularly true in the ancient world, where the virtues of a ruler had been analysed for centuries by historians and rhetoricians: rulers knew perfectly well what behaviour was expected of them, to be advertised on coins or proclaimed in the preambles to their

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2 Allen 1981, 205, with n.189 (Anastasius of Antioch), 218 (Gregory), 226 (Tiberius), 233, 245 (Maurice). The discussion of Evagrius in Tinnefeld (1971, 43–8) is very limited, since it deals only with Justinian and Justin II and does not consider the interaction between categories of praise and criticism.

3 Nixon and Rodgers 26–33; Vanderspoel 1995, 220.

4 Averil Cameron 1977, 2.

5 Cf. Seager 1984, 163f.

legislation,[6] and subjects knew what key words or themes to include in their addresses or requests to their rulers; rulers who disappointed expectations (or worse) would have their failings highlighted in the historiographical tradition, to serve as warnings against such conduct by others in the future. Individual rulers could have different characters and different priorities, but it was unlikely that a completely new royal virtue would be devised—there was perhaps greater scope for the refinement and diversification of royal vices.

Evagrius' approach to the issues of praise and blame deserves to be reviewed: what qualities and attributes matter for him, how consistent are his judgements, are they narrow stereotypes, or something more? The investigation will need to cover both the formal character sketches and the opinions embedded in the narrative, as well as evidence to substantiate his judgements in contemporary sources. Agathias, while proclaiming the importance of critical judgements, stressed that these must be distinct from flattery (*Histories*, preface 16); this passage was perhaps based on Lucian, who complained that bad histories were being produced because writers did not distinguish between history and eulogy,[7] but the sentiment is common and underlies Tacitus' famous claim to be writing *sine ira et studio* ('without indignation or partisanship', *Annals* 1.1), which distances Tacitus from invective as well as panegyric. Agathias may have succeeded better than Tacitus in excluding personal animosities, but that is little more than a reflection of his lesser quality as a literary creator of historical narrative: there are few places where his account reveals the sparkle that personal engagement and strong interest in events could have contributed.[8] The targets of Agathias' criticism are unknown,[9] and are less important than the general point that the judgements which were the stock-in-trade of historians could easily merge into flattery and panegyric.

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[6] On the interaction of the propaganda of coinage and panegyrics see MacCormack 1975.

[7] Lucian, *On Writing History* 7–12. The connection between Agathias and Lucian is urged by Lieberich (1900, II 22–3), but treated more cautiously by Averil Cameron 1970, 59.

[8] Exceptions are his treatments of the earthquakes of AD 551 and 557, of which he had personal experience in each case (Michael Whitby 1992, 32–8).

[9] Averil Cameron (1970, 33) suggested Procopius' *Wars* as a possibility, with John Lydus as another author known to have written a history, presumably panegyrical, of some of Justinian's victories.

Evagrius, writing a decade or so after Agathias and apparently without being able to obtain a copy of his work to read (5.24), appreciated the danger: his last book began with an enthusiastic assessment of the qualities of the reigning emperor Maurice (AD 582–602), which Evagrius self-consciously defended (6.1).[10] Granted that Evagrius knew Maurice's parents (5.21), that he jealously defended the reputation of Maurice's brother-in-law (6.3), and that he had been rewarded with the rank of prefect for composing a work in praise of the birth of his first son Theodosius (6.24), this claim to a disinterested stance rings hollow. But Evagrius was aware of the discrepancy between the expectation that historians should record the truth and the subjectivity that was inherent in the formulation of opinions.

Maurice is accorded two separate character sketches, first at his appointment to command the eastern armies and then at his accession and marriage, so that, as befits the current emperor, his qualities are presented at greater length than any other individual:

> He was an intelligent and shrewd man, absolutely exact in all things and unshakeable. Being balanced and precise in life-style and habits, he was master both of his belly, taking only what was necessary and readily available, and also of all the other things in which the undisciplined life takes pride. For the masses, he was not easily approachable for petitions, nor of ready ear, knowing that the one is conducive to contempt, the other leads to flattery. And so he provided access to himself sparingly, and this for serious matters, while his ears he blocked to the superfluous, not with wax as in poetry, but rather with reason. Hence reason was an excellent key for them, opening and closing them when appropriate in conversations. He had so thrust away ignorance, the mother of boldness, and cowardice which is a foreigner but also a neighbour to her, that risks were prudence and hesitation security. Since courage and wisdom were the charioteers for opportunities and directed the reins towards whatever necessity dictated, both relaxation and intensification of his impulses happened with a certain measure and rhythm. (5.19)

> But I would say that in Maurice alone religion and good fortune have thus come together, since religion constrained good fortune and did not permit her to be diverted at all. Thereafter he has been determined to wear the purple and the crown not only on his body

[10] Cf. Themistius *Or.* 1.12c–18b for insistence that his praise of Constantius is true; Socrates 7.22.1 for defence of his encomiastic assessment of the virtues of the reigning emperor, Theodosius II; John of Ephesus, *EH* 3.22 for 'disinterested' praise of Tiberius; George of Pisidia, *Persian Expedition* 1.35–43, 3.37–40, etc. for Heraclius.

> but also on his soul: for alone of recent emperors has he been emperor over himself, and becoming in very truth a sole ruler he has expelled from his own soul the mob rule of the passions, while by establishing an aristocracy in his own calculations he has presented himself as a living representation of virtue, educating his subjects to imitation. This is not said by me as flattery: for what indeed should be said, since that man is unaware of what is being written? That these things are so will be proved both by what has been granted to him by God, and by the events of all types which must unanimously be attributed by us to God. In addition to everything else, he was eager that the blood of those on trial for imperial matters should never be shed in any circumstances.
> (6.1f.)

Maurice's key qualities for Evagrius were his shrewd wisdom (φρενήρης τε καὶ ἀγχίνους; φρόνησις) that allowed him to take decisions on the basis of knowledge, courage (ἀνδρεία) and the ability to remain steadfast (ἀδόνητος), self-discipline that established him as an example to his subjects, moderate reserve that made him accessible when necessary (τοῖς πολλοῖς οὐκ εὐπρόσοδος), and an aversion to bloodshed. Although he is not specifically praised for his piety, it is clear that he enjoys the favour of God, not only from the statement that Religion (θεοσέβεια) and God have contributed to his achievements,[11] but also from the portents that had presaged his accession (5.21).[12]

Many of the attributes highlighted in these assessments are also illustrated by Evagrius' narrative, and are noted in other sources. Maurice displayed good sense in his reaction to the flight of Khusro II, devising 'the most excellent plan even in this matter, and from this taking the measure of the uncertainty and changeability of human existence ...' (6.17). It was not an instantaneous decision, and Khusro indeed had begun to get impatient at Maurice's prudence, so that the plan could be said to exhibit 'a certain measure and rhythm'. Theophylact, too, comments on an imperial plan to persuade the Avar khagan to withdraw from

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[11] A specific example is the defeat of Tamkhusro, 'solely through its general's devoutness and trust in God' (5.20).

[12] The *Suda*, almost certainly from Menander (= fr. 23.2 Blockley), preserves a brief character sketch: 'This Maurice, though he had not been nurtured in wars and conflicts, still he was sensible, dignified and precise, and intermixed within himself two things contrasted with each other, dignity of intellect and mildness, which were devoid of all pride and disdain.' There is some resemblance to the language used by Evagrius: κατηκριβώμενος (*Suda*)/ ἀκριβής; ἔμφρων (*Suda*)/ φρόνησις.

Thrace, 'which was inspired by shrewdness' (ἀγχίνοια, 6.5.11).[13] Courage is not specifically attested in Evagrius' narrative, but he knew Maurice as a successful general on the eastern front and perhaps based his judgement on his actions then; Theophylact, writing after Maurice's death in 602, pointed to the courage which he displayed at the moment of execution (8.11.3). Steadfastness might seem no more than an aspect of courage, and Maurice's death could be interpreted as a display of philosophical endurance, but this quality might also be regarded as two-edged, with a tendency towards obstinacy and inflexibility: these were certainly qualities exemplified in Maurice's determination to make his Balkan armies winter north of the Danube (Theophylact 8.6.2–10), his refusal to ransom prisoners from the Avars (Theophanes 278.32–280.10), or the increasingly acrimonious negotiations with Pope Gregory over the ecumenical title (Gregory, *Register* 5.44f; 7.24, 30).

Maurice's ability to restore discipline and order is praised by Menander Protector (fr. 23.3f.), and Theophylact describes a particular incident which makes the same point (6.3.3f.). With regard to controlled accessibility, an important attribute for Evagrius, it is not possible to cite parallels,[14] but various incidents testify to his aversion to bloodshed: Evagrius cites Maurice's leniency towards the Ghassanid leader al-Mundhir (6.2), to which could be added the pagan Paulinus who was only condemned to death on the insistence of the Patriarch John Nesteutes (Theophylact 1.11.20; John of Nikiu ch. 98), the rebel Smbat Bagratuni who was spared from exposure to wild beasts in the hippodrome (Theophylact 3.8.7f; Sebeos ch. 10), or the rioters who threatened Maurice in 602 (Theophylact 8.5.3f.), when he certainly displayed his self-control. Finally, there are numerous stories and events which illustrate his serious Christian convictions.[15]

This extensive catalogue of imperial virtues might seem complete, but, disregarding the old qualification of military skill and victory that had become less prominent after emperors ceased to

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[13] Cf. Menander Protector fr. 23.11.8–12 for his good planning in 581, which was negated by the indiscipline of other generals.

[14] The issue of accessibility has a long pedigree: see Wallace-Hadrill 1982, esp. 33–5. A balance had to be struck between the preservation of royal dignity and the sin of pride which complete inaccessibility demonstrated (e.g. Thucydides 1.130.2 for the Spartan Pausanias, the earliest instance).

[15] See Whitby 1988, 22f.

lead their troops in person, it is notable that nothing is said about generosity. This is no accident since, with the exception of unpopular benefactions to his relatives, Maurice was renowned for parsimony to the extent that in 602 the crowds in Constantinople labelled him a Marcianite (Theophylact 8.9.3), a reference to a Christian sect that rejected normal notions of charity. Maurice's reluctance to disburse money, which contrasted so sharply with the lavish generosity of his predecessor Tiberius, had to be excused by supporters and provided a ready target for his critics.[16] Evagrius resolved the problem by silence.

Tiberius is another ruler who receives fulsome, though not unqualified praise:

> Tiberius was indeed very tall in size and most exceptionally good-looking, quite beyond compare not only with emperors but with everyone even: thus, first, his appearance was appropriate for tyranny, but in spirit he was both gentle and merciful, welcoming everyone at once at first sight, considering wealth to be a sufficiency in the matter of donations for everyone, not just with regard to their need but also for superfluity. For he did not consider what those in need ought to receive, but what it befitted a Roman emperor to give, and he regarded as adulterated the gold which had come in as a result of tears. (5.13)

There are three elements to the portrayal of Tiberius.[17] The first, and least important, is his appearance (μέγιστος ... εὐπρεπέστατος); he was still a young man when he ascended the throne (John of Ephesus 3.22; cf. Corippus, *Iust.* 1.219), and is alleged to have proved attractive to the dowager empress Sophia (Theophanes 250)—though that might just reflect her reluctance to lose power. Evagrius, however, undercuts the significance of such externals by the reference to tyranny (ἄξιον τυραννίδος), perhaps recalling the tendency of handsome young emperors to become tyrannical (e.g. Caligula, Nero, Commodus, Elegabalus),[18] and immediately contrasts this (μὲν ... δὲ) with Tiberius' genuine virtues of humanity and generosity. Second, he was gentle and merciful (ἤπιός τε καὶ φιλάνθρωπος), and welcomed everyone. John of Ephesus refers to his gentleness and reluctance to condemn people to death (*EH* 3.22), which is illustrated by his investigation in 579/80 of

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[16] Cf. Whitby 1988, 18f.

[17] Note the important discussion of depictions of Tiberius in Cameron 1977, 11–14.

[18] The danger is hinted at in John of Ephesus, *EH* 3.22.

accusations of pagan practices;[19] Gregory of Tours notes his custom of welcoming all men on an equal footing, and records stories of his tolerant reaction to the plotting of the Empress Sophia and the general Justinian (*HF* 6.30; 5.30).[20] The last, and best-attested, aspect of Tiberius' character is his generosity: the law proclaiming the tax remission which Evagrius mentions (5.13) is preserved, and its preamble shows the interlinking of imperial rhetoric with panegyrical portrayal, since it proclaims both Tiberius' respect for mercy (φιλανθρωπία) and justice (δικαιοσύνη) as the supreme benefits that rulers could bring to mankind, and his sympathy for the poverty (ἀπορία) that afflicted most people (*Novel* 163). Evagrius' hint that the generosity was carried to excess (οὐ πρὸς μόνην τὴν χρείαν, ἀλλὰ καὶ κατὰ τὸ περιούσιον) is corroborated by contemporaries: John of Ephesus relates various stories about his munificence, which was carried to such extravagance that, while Tiberius was Caesar, Sophia at one stage removed the keys to the treasury and placed him on an allowance; after Tiberius' death, Maurice complained that the imperial treasuries had been swept clean (*EH* 3.11, 14; 5.19f.).[21]

If there is clear criticism of Tiberius' largesse, it is perhaps not fanciful to suggest that Evagrius also thought he was too open to visitors: he welcomed everyone at first sight (εὐθὺς ἀπὸ τοὺς βλέμματος ἅπαντας δεξιούμενος), whereas favoured individuals such as Maurice and the Patriarch Anastasius are praised for restricting access to necessary occasions. Instances of Tiberius' excessive openness might be seen in his response to the popular slanders against Gregory of Antioch (Evag. 5.18), or his inability to resist pressure from courtiers to permit persecution of Monophysites and from the populace to attack Arians (John of Ephesus, *EH* 3.21, 25). With regard to Maurice, Evagrius observed that excessive approachability might lead to contempt (5.19), and Tiberius may have suffered in this respect, since John of Ephesus conceded that he was too humble and inspired no fear (*EH* 3.22).[22] Another

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[19] For discussion see Rochow 1976.

[20] These stories are chronologically impossible, since Justinian died before Tiberius' accession as Augustus (Whitby 1988, 268), but they still confirm the public perception of Tiberius as a ruler.

[21] There may also be a hint of reproach in Menander fr. 18.5, where Tiberius is uncritically generous to various tribes, of whom some revolt shortly afterwards (but note fr. 24 for neutral comment).

[22] Cf. Socrates *EH* 3.1 on Julian's unsuitable image. Rulers had to lead: a

common element in Evagrius' praise of leaders that is absent in Tiberius is reference to his prudent or shrewd planning (contrast Maurice, Gregory, Domitian). Again the omission may be deliberate: Menander admitted that, immediately after Justin's madness, Tiberius was at a loss and was only rescued by an initiative from Khusro (18.1.1–5 Blockley), and, much more damagingly, that his confidence in agreements with the Avars resulted in a lack of preparations for defending Sirmium (25.2.11–13 Blockley).

The two other contemporaries to receive extensive praise in Evagrius are the successive patriarchs of Antioch, Anastasius (AD 559–70, 592–8) and Gregory (570–92), and his assessments exhibit significant overlaps with his presentations of emperors. First Gregory:

> Gregory was in intellect and spiritual virtue absolutely supreme among all, most energetic in whatever he embarked on, invulnerable to fear, and most unsusceptible to yielding or cowering before power. He made donations of money with such munificence, employing liberality and generosity on all occasions, that whenever he went out in public, great numbers followed after him, even apart from his normal companions, and all who saw or learned of his approach flocked together. And the attention to such great office was secondary to the honour for the man, since of their own free will people generally desired to see him at close quarters and to hear his discussion. For he was most capable of producing a longing for himself in everyone, however they encountered him; he was admirable in appearance, most pleasantly sweet in utterance, sharp as any man in instantaneous perception, most particularly sharp in action, and most capable of devising excellent counsel and judging his own affairs and those of others. Hence indeed he achieved so much, putting off nothing to the morrow. In dealing with everything without delay, as necessity summoned and opportunity complied, he astounded not only the Roman emperors but also the Persian, as I shall show as befits each matter. There was in him much vehemence, and sometimes even passion, but again kindliness and gentleness in no small measure but to a considerable excess. Hence there applied most excellently to him the sentiments devised by Gregory the Theologian, 'austerity mingled with modesty', so that the one was not damaged by the other, but both had renown through one another. (5.6)

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complete antithesis is presented in the person of Germanus, elected leader and emperor by the mutinous eastern army in 588: 'they compelled him to be their ruler though he was ruled, to control them though controlled, and to be their master though their captive' (6.5). On the literary construction of the portrait of Germanus see Krivouchine 1993, 155f.

Gregory is a difficult figure to assess, since Evagrius is our main source of information, but an anecdote in John Moschus' *Pratum spirituale* (140) records a conversation among Palestinian monks who agreed that Gregory excelled in the virtues of almsgiving, forgiveness, tears and compassion. A hostile version of his munificence and generosity is presented in John of Ephesus, who protests that he only escaped from accusations of sexual misconduct through bribery and that he obtained funds from the emperor to rebuild the Antioch hippodrome (*EH* 5.17).[23] His munificence is also mentioned in passing in Evagrius' narrative, which explains his influence with the eastern army through benefactions of food and clothing to new recruits (6.11). His energy, or efficacy, in handling all affairs (ἐς ὅ τι ὁρμήσειεν ἐξεργαστικώτατος), and capacity for planning (κρῖναι τά τε οἰκεῖα τά τε τῶν ἄλλων ἱκανώτατος),[24] were demonstrated not only in his involvement in the restoration of Khusro, as Evagrius explains towards the end of the passage quoted (cf. 6.18) but also in the suppression of the eastern mutiny (6.11). The latter incident also required effective oratory (6.12f.),[25] and Gregory's powers of persuasion were again in demand when the Roman investment of Martyropolis faltered (6.14). Swiftness of judgement is also illustrated in the handling of mutineers, when his successful persuasion might have been thwarted through delay caused by the soldiers' oath not to receive back Philippicus as general: Gregory at once (μηδὲ πρὸς τοῦτο μελλήσας ἢ ὅλως ἐλινύσας) stated that as bishop he had the power to bind and loose on earth and in heaven, and the momentum of the reconciliation was not disrupted. This interaction between narrative and the character appraisal provides a possible insight into how Evagrius constructed such formal passages: knowledge of specific

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23 A cynical reader of Evagrius' character sketch might infer that the crowds which thronged Gregory's public appearances were more likely to be attracted by his fame for liberality than interest in his discourse.

24 The importance of these qualities within Evagrius' overall scheme is demonstrated by the brief assessment of Domitian: 'Domitian, Bishop of Melitene, a relative of his [the Emperor Maurice], an intelligent and shrewd man, most particularly capable in word and deed and most energetic in the greatest of affairs' (6.18). Of the four adjectives applied to Domitian, two (ἐξεργαστικώτατος, ἱκανώτατος) are shared with Gregory and two with Maurice (φρενήρης, ἀγχίνους).

25 The analysis of Krivouchine (1993) exaggerates the inevitability of Gregory's success; Evagrius was more concerned to display Gregory's various talents in operation.

incidents in the individual's career became the basis for generalizations.

Gregory receives high praise, but as with Maurice there are telling omissions: nothing is said about his relative accessibility, and this silence could be connected with Gregory's involvement in two major scandals, one a pagan charge during Tiberius' reign and the other a sexual charge which was dismissed by Maurice. The former accusation is said by Evagrius to have originated because a certain wheeler-dealer called Anatolius insinuated himself into Gregory's entourage (5.18), frequently visiting him both to discuss his affairs and to solicit even greater power through these links. This suggests some inattention to the ordering of his human contacts, and the same could be inferred from the sexual accusation since, had he been known to be very strict, there would have been no basis for the slander. Evagrius does not conceal that Gregory was somewhat irascible and aroused mixed emotions within his city: in spite of the mention of public enthusiasm whenever he appeared, there were occasions when not only his flock but also the local governor were bitterly hostile (6.7). In this connection, the absence of Gregory from the *Life* of Symeon Stylites the Younger may be significant: Evagrius presents their relationship as cordial, with the patriarch keen to see the stylite when news of his impending death arrived (6.23), but the *Life* was composed under the restored Patriarch Anastasius when there may have been no incentive to invent a close friendship. Gregory, along with the Emperor Maurice, is one of the two most prominent individuals in Evagrius' narrative, but, in spite of his bias towards him, Evagrius was prepared to mention unfavourable information.[26]

Like Gregory, the Patriarch Anastasius is praised by Evagrius, albeit for a distinctive range of virtues:

> Now Anastasius was especially skilled in sacred matters, as well as being strict in his habits and life-style, so that he paid attention even to extremely minute matters and in no way diverged from what was upright and established, and especially not in significant matters and ones which related to the Divinity itself. His character was so well-balanced that he was neither vulnerable to what was unsuitable by being approachable and accessible, nor by being

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[26] Evagrius is not always so open. He declined to record the reasons for the departure of the Empress Eudocia for Jerusalem (1.21), or to give a full account of the campaigns of the general Philippicus (6.3), even though in each case he expressed his dissatisfaction with the accepted account.

> austere and merciless was he inaccessible for what was necessary. And so in serious matters his ear was ready and his tongue fluent, straightway resolving questions, but in trivial matters his ears were completely shut and a bridle checked his tongue, so that both speech was modulated by thought and silence was made mightier than speech. (4.40)

In contrast to Gregory, Anastasius was clearly very particular about access to his presence and resembled Maurice in preserving a balance between being available for important matters and distanced from trivia.[27] His main intellectual strength was in theology, and his extreme precision and ability to resolve questions are illustrated in the role he played in the complex doctrinal negotiations to reconcile divergent Monophysite factions as a preliminary to a wider reunion with the Chalcedonians: Monophysites appealed to him to act as mediator, and Pope Gregory corresponded with him on ecclesiastical matters even after Justinian had deposed him.[28] There is corroboration that Anastasius was a respected and intelligent influence in doctrinal matters, but there are again omissions in Evagrius' portrait: nothing is said about Anastasius' generosity or his energy and efficacy. Anastasius' expenditure of church funds had been controversial and, although the criticism that his spending was unbounded and for unsuitable purposes (εἰς ἄπειρον καὶ μὴ κατὰ τὸ προσῆκον γενέσθαι) was made by Justin II in the context of Anastasius' dismissal from office in 570 (5.5), this may have been an aspect of the patriarch about which Evagrius felt awkward. Energy or efficacy are not mentioned: the various doctrinal discussions in which Anastasius participated came to nothing, and there is no evidence for his involvement in major secular affairs, in contrast to Gregory and Bishop Domitian, the two priests to whom Evagrius accorded the superlative 'most energetic' (ἐξεργαστικώτατος). Thus Anastasius is another example of the need to attend to what is not said, as much as to what is praised.

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[27] The general Priscus illustrates the opposite extreme to Tiberius and Gregory: 'He was not an accessible man, one not easily approached, not even with the exception of essential matters, who considered that everything would be achieved if for the most part he remained by himself, since thereby indeed, through fear, the soldiers would be more submissive to their orders. And so, after arriving at the camp with a supercilious and arrogant expression and a rather elegant appearance, ...' (6.4). The result was a serious mutiny, with which the martinet Priscus naturally failed to cope.

[28] For the evidence see Allen 1981, 28–31, 215–17.

In contrast to these panegyrical assessments, Evagrius' presentation of Justin II is almost completely hostile:

> In his lifestyle Justin was undisciplined and he completely wallowed in luxuries and outlandish delights, so ardent a lover of the property of others that he transacted everything for illicit gain, not even fearing the Deity in the matter of priesthoods, which he sold to the first-comers, making even these openly subject to purchase. Being ruled by the vices of bravado and cowardice, he first had Justin summoned, a relative of his ... And the emperor himself and his consort Sophia did not remit their wrath, or have their fill of seething rage, until they had looked at Justin's severed head and kicked it with their feet. (5.1–2)

Justin was a convenient foil to the virtues of Tiberius and Maurice and it is important to be reminded that, before his madness, there was a very different portrait that is exemplified in the panegyric of Corippus, and that elements of a favourable presentation do survive in other sources.[29] Evagrius does give Justin credit for terminating the disruption in the Church caused by Justinian's heresy. This praise for Justin's orthodoxy and concern for ecclesiastical harmony could have been extended: he preserves the text of Justin's moderate Christological edict (the only Greek source to do so), and should have been aware of the imperially-sponsored attempts at reconciliation between Chalcedonians and Monophysites that had preceded it;[30] but all this was overshadowed by Justin's maltreatment of Anastasius of Antioch.[31] But, as with Zeno whose character is in many ways presented as an anticipation of Justin II,[32] and who also issued a unifying Christological edict (the Henoticon), full credit for good ecclesiastical policies is not given to a 'bad' emperor. Instead, Evagrius constructs an image of Justin that grows out of his own experience: greed is illustrated in his dealings with Anastasius of Antioch, an excellent patriarch whom the emperor unjustly deposed (5.5), bravado and cowardice in the failure to

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29 See in particular Cameron 1977, 2–9; also ead. 1976b.

30 Evagrius also ignores the controversies engendered by the rivalries between Eutychius and John Scholasticus, the successive patriarchs of Constantinople, for which see Cameron 1988, 234–6.

31 Stein (1919, 50 n.4) suggested that Evagrius' failure to obtain the type of imperial patronage that he secured under Tiberius and Maurice (6.24) lay at the root of his hostility towards Justin II, but there is no foundation for this speculation; Evagrius may well not have visited Constantinople during Justin's reign, or had other occasion for direct dealings with the emperor.

32 Indiscipline and devotion to luxuries (3.1); cowardice and inability to cope with surprises (3.3; cf. 5.11).

make any proper preparations for war with Persia (5.7f.), delusion in his refusal to believe the correct advice of Gregory of Antioch (5.9); Justin gave precedence to his customary luxuries and pleasures, and took personal pleasure in the death of someone who had loyally defended the empire.[33] The key elements in the character sketch are also presented in the narrative.

Although Justinian was emperor during the first half of Evagrius' life, there is no formal assessment that reviews his qualities and abilities, but Evagrius' opinions are still clear: Justinian perished 'after filling absolutely everywhere with confusion and turmoil' (5.1). At first sight it is odd that a ruler who debated and legislated on behalf of Chalcedonian orthodoxy for almost half a century should be treated with such hostility by the neo-Chalcedonian church historian. The explanation, however, is not obscure and (as with Justin II) lies in Justinian's dealings with Anastasius of Antioch,[34] the imperial actions which would have impinged most directly on Evagrius' world and which accordingly shaped his appreciation of the whole reign. In his last year Justinian lapsed into the aphthartodocete heresy, which he attempted to impose on all patriarchs within his realm; this provoked a robust response from Anastasius, who was threatened with deposition and banishment, from which he was only reprieved when Justinian was struck dead at the very moment when he was pronouncing the sentence (4.39–41). Evagrius mentioned Justinian's support for Chalcedon, but approval is undercut by the reference to the disagreement on Christological matters, which Evagrius hints might not even have been genuine, between Justinian and Theodora (4.10f.). Overall, considering the time and energy that Justinian devoted to attempting to resolve the doctrinal and other ecclesiastical problems of his reign, Evagrius devotes surpringly little space to his various initiatives: for example, the Theopaschite Edict is ignored, the preliminaries to the Three Chapters controversy are skimmed over, and there is no mention of discussions with Nestorian representatives.

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[33] There is an interesting contrast with the presentation of the death of Vitalian at the start of Justin I's reign (5.3): Justin I is afraid of Vitalian, and deceives him—but Justin is not then blamed for his murder in the imperial palace, which is described as a proper return for his previous misdeeds.

[34] Cameron 1988, 236f.; Allen 1981, 183.

Certain successes for Justinian could not be denied, but in his presentation of the Vandal and Gothic wars it is possible to observe Evagrius radically changing the narrative emphasis of his source, Procopius, to demonstrate that Justinian's successes were to be attributed to God: the Vandal narrative focuses on episodes that show the Vandals as sacrilegious persecutors with Roman victory divinely foreordained (4.14–18), while the less convincing achievements against the Goths are outshone by the stories of the conversion of various tribes (4.20, 22f.); the war is concluded by Narses whose devotion to the Virgin Mary is emphasized (4.24).[35] A similar refocusing of Procopian material is evident in the treatment of the Persian campaigns of AD 540–4 (4.25–8): miracles at Apamea, Edessa and Sergiopolis are related at length, whereas Khusro's great achievements are passed over with allusions to broken agreements and trickery.

After this long sequence in which Evagrius reveals how God has secured victory for the Romans, or at least prevented worse misfortunes, attention shifts to Justinian himself (4.30–2). Evagrius first criticizes the emperor's greed, and then turns to his lavishness with money, which resulted in the construction of numerous churches and charitable establishments: superficially these might seem to bring credit to Justinian, but Evagrius adds the proviso that such things must be accomplished from one's own resources and in a pure manner. Mention of buildings naturally leads into the stupendous construction of St Sophia, but the reservations about ill-gotten gains ensure that readers are not inclined to praise Justinian himself for this achievement. The sequence of thought then leads via the Nika Riot, which had necessitated the rebuilding of St Sophia, to Justinian's criminal attachment to the Blue faction and harsh criticism of the emperor's behaviour. Evagrius then records contemporary holy men and miracles (4.33–6), probably as a further demonstration of the reality of God's favour to the Roman world as counterbalance to Justinian's failings,[36] and the book concludes with episcopal and doctrinal matters: the Three Chapters

[35] Narses' attachment to the Virgin is a significant addition to a narrative that is otherwise derived, in skewed fashion, from Procopius.

[36] Compare the way in which the natural disasters of Justin I's reign, in particular the destruction of Antioch by an earthquake, may be offset by the manifestations of divine favour through the miracles of Zosimas and John the Chozibite (4.7).

controversy, the Fifth Ecumenical Council, and finally the Aphthartodocete controversy (4.37–41). Here, even before Justinian's terminal heresy, there is a hint of imperial error in Justinian's close attachment to Theodore Ascidas, the champion of the Origenist monks from Palestine whose condemnation for blasphemy at the Fifth Council is then explicitly recorded.

By contrast the pro-Monophysite Anastasius receives a surprisingly favourable presentation from Evagrius, and again the most significant factor is a personal connection: Cosmas, 'bishop of my own Epiphania', came into dispute with Severus, the Monophysite patriarch of Antioch; Anastasius initially ordered the local governor to intervene against Cosmas but then, in a display of mercy, retracted the order on being advised that this would result in great bloodshed:

> There was such an abundance of clemency in Anastasius that he explicitly wrote to Asiaticus that he wished nothing to go ahead, not even if it was a major and important matter, if even a drop of blood were to be spilt.

Information about this affair was passed down in Evagrius' family (3.34). Evagrius' predisposition towards Anastasius is reinforced by his abolition of the *chrysargyron* tax, an impost that had permitted the pagan historian Zosimus to launch a bitter attack on the immorality and greed of Constantine, who had introduced the tax; Evagrius could not only praise the determined honesty of Anastasius but also launch a tendentious attack on Zosimus and contrast the fates of pagan and Christian rulers (3.39–41). Credit for these actions preserves Anastasius from criticism on a variety of other counts. He is praised as a peaceful person, who was opposed to innovations and disruption, especially in ecclesiastical matters: the fact that this resulted in complete confusion on doctrinal issues is related almost as if it were a benefit, and the depositions of Euphemius and Macedonius, successive patriarchs of Constantinople whose refusal to abandon Chalcedon led to arguments with the emperor, are explained away by their alleged status as innovators (3.30). When Evagrius relates in greater detail the dispute between Anastasius and Macedonius (3.32), it is clear that a very different interpretation could have been placed on events, with the patriarch as defender of orthodoxy and the victim of false accusations which the emperor concocted; Evagrius subsequently refers to slanders by Severus that contributed to Macedonius' expulsion

(3.44),[37] but he does not attempt to produce a coherent account of the dispute since that would have involved criticism of Anastasius. Much the same is true of Evagrius' treatment of tax matters: removal of the *chrysargyron* was an action worthy of an emperor and receives extensive praise, but a new gold tax devised by Anastasius is then briefly mentioned with the comment that he acted unworthily, and the transfer of tax-collecting from the curial class to special officials is said to have undermined the position of local élites (3.42). With regard to Anastasius, Evagrius further minimizes criticism by ignoring the Christological angle to the rebellions of Vitalian and the emperor's support for the innovation in the Trisagion which caused a major riot in Constantinople (3.43f.): Evagrius had personal reasons for regarding Anastasius favourably, the exact opposite of the case for Justinian.[38]

Of the fifth-century emperors, Theodosius II is praised for his piety and zeal to promote Christianity (1.12), and there is passing comment on the treacherous ingratitude of Leo which led to the murder of his benefactor Aspar together with the latter's family (2.16), but only Zeno and Marcian receive extended comment, vitriolic and laudatory respectively. In many respects Zeno is a precursor for Justin II: he lacked self-discipline, was completely devoted to luxuries, was a coward and incapable of coping with surprises:

> But Zeno ..., as if reckoning that he would not be in complete control unless he also pursued all the available pleasures with complete licence, entrusted himself from the outset to the assaults of desires to such an extent that he did not restrain himself from anything that was improper and unlawful; ... the emperor is recognized not from matters in which he naturally controls others, but from those in which he first rules and controls himself, by refusing admission to himself to anything inappropriate, and being so uncontaminated by acts of indulgence that while alive he

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[37] Severus is unfavourably presented in Evagrius: quite apart from the repeated anathemas that he pronounced on Chalcedon, the description of his public appearances in Antioch suggests that he had been influenced by the *grandeur* of his see (τὸν τῆς τοσαύτης ἐπισκοπῆς ὄγκον: 3.34), and he is said to have *boasted* of his success in winning over the Patriarch Anthimus to the Monophysite cause (μεγαλαυχεῖ: 4.11).

[38] Evagrius used John Malalas, and so would have known the story (409.17–20) that Anastasius died after a great flash of lightning and a thunderclap; but such supernatural proof of wickedness was inappropriate for an emperor to whom he was favourably disposed (contrast the presentation of Justinian's death).

> provides an image of the virtues for imitation, an education for his subjects. (3.1)

> He completely failed to contemplate anything courageous: for wrongdoing is ignoble and despondent, and demonstrated its cowardice through submission to the pleasures. Instead he fled headlong, surrendering such a great realm to Basiliscus without a struggle. (3.3)

He overtaxed his subjects, while failing to protect them from external enemies (3.2), he arranged the murder of a prominent supporter (3.24), and was blatantly treacherous in his dealings with Illus (3.26). Condemnation is confined to Zeno's secular actions, for which Evagrius relied on his compatriot Eustathius for information.[39] On the other hand, Zeno's ecclesiastical and doctrinal actions are presented in a more neutral fashion, and there is perhaps even praise for his decision not to exile the aged Timothy Aelurus from Alexandria (3.11). Evagrius' source, the Monophysite historian Zachariah of Mitylene, supported Zeno's departures from strict defence of Chalcedon,[40] but Evagrius himself also approved Zeno's attempts to achieve peace in the Church. It appears that his basic hostility to Zeno affected the assessment of these actions, so that Zeno does not receive full credit for trying to reconcile divisions within the Church whereas Anastasius is praised for less significant measures; the usurper Basiliscus is not treated with the hostility that his Monophysite initiatives might have deserved simply because he was the opponent of the monstrous Zeno, an abomination even to his relatives.

If Zeno anticipates Justin II, Marcian shares many of the virtues of Maurice and Tiberius, piety, moderation in punishment, generosity:

> Marcian was pious in divine matters and just in matters relating to his subjects. He regarded as wealth not what was stored away, nor indeed what was collected by tax-gatherers, but one thing alone: the ability to provide for the needy and to make their wealth secure for those with substantial property. He was not terrifying in punishment, but in advance of punishment; accordingly he held the realm as a prize of virtue, not an inheritance ... Marcian wished that a common worship be given to God by everyone, once the voices that had been muddled through impiety were again piously

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39 Allen 1981, 121, 140f.

40 Allen 1981, 140f., though overstating the 'deferential attitude' of the narrative.

united, and that the divinity should be glorified through one and the same creed. (2.1)

Like Maurice, Marcian's accession could be prefigured by indications of divine favour, while his φιλανθρωπία had been demonstrated in the respect for an unburied corpse which had almost cost him his life (2.1). His responsibility for Chalcedon justified a reputation for piety and concern for ecclesiastical unity, at least in Evagrius' view, while tax concessions to senatorial families and a general remission of arrears explain[41] the praise for his attitude to wealth. His reign was short, but 'left for all mankind a memorial that was truly imperial' (2.8), namely the Council of Chalcedon; in both respects he was like Tiberius, whose brief reign left an immortal memory and an excellent bequest, namely the proclamation of Maurice (5.23).[42] Thus, by implication, Maurice is parallel to the Council of Chalcedon.

This review of the most important assessments of character in Evagrius highlights the limited range of qualities and attributes that were of great significance to him, but it also reveals that the matrix of key characteristics was applied in a fairly flexible way to produce judgements which point to important distinctions between these individuals.[43] There is considerable overlap in language, as noted for example with regard to Domitian of Melitene, but the individual characters are not interchangeable: Anastasius and Gregory were different as patriarchs, just as Tiberius and Maurice were as emperors; the only exceptions are emperors from long before Evagrius' own experience, Zeno who is analagous to Justin II and Marcian who anticipates a combination of Tiberius and Maurice.

For Evagrius religion was the most decisive factor in weighing a man's character.[44] Piety gave victory to generals such as Narses and Maurice (4.24; 5.20), while opposition to God brought disgrace on Khusro (4.27). The pious ruler would have a concern for religious harmony, as Marcian displayed in his efforts to terminate the muddle that the cunning Devil had wickedly introduced into

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41 See Jones 219.

42 For the conceit, cf. Theophylact 1.1.15 (Maurice's reign as the glorious epitaph for Tiberius).

43 Not surprisingly many of the characteristics are present in the list of 14 main areas of concern which Chesnut (1977, 224–32) identified in the presentation of emperors by Socrates and Sozomen.

44 Cf. Downey 1965.

the Church through the agency of Nestorius (2.1; 1.1f.). There were, though, limits to the measures that were appropriate to achieve this: Anastasius is praised for upholding stability, even though this entailed considerable disunity (3.30), whereas Justinian's imposition of Chalcedon is undercut both by Theodora's support for its opponents and by the coercion that was required to achieve acceptance (4.10f.).[45] Innovation is another key term in this context: Justinian was an innovator (indeed for Procopius as well as Evagrius), whereas Anastasius renounced innovation; even Justin II briefly receives credit for repudiating Justinian's innovations (5.1), the only respect in which he is praised. In ecclesiastical affairs the arch-innovator for Evagrius was Nestorius (1.2): he received fitting punishment in this world and the prospect of more in the hereafter (1.7), just as Justinian was struck down at an opportune moment and 'after filling absolutely everything with confusion and turmoil and collecting the wages for this at the conclusion to his life, departed to the lowest places of punishment' (5.1). If a parallel can be drawn between Maurice and Chalcedon as beneficial bequests to the empire, so Justinian and Nestorius may be linked as pernicious influences.

Self-control is another key factor.[46] Zeno and Justin II spectacularly lacked this, whereas Maurice epitomized it; Maurice had expelled 'the mob rule of the passions' (6.1), whereas Zeno was completely enslaved:

> But he who makes himself accessible to the pleasures gradually and insensibly becomes a most shameful slave, an unransomed captive, constantly exchanging masters like useless slaves, since indeed the innumerable pleasures are established as mistresses with no limit whatsoever to their succession and mutual replacement: the current pleasure is always inconstant, and becomes an incitement and introduction to another, until a person either becomes truly master and exiles the rabble-dominion of the pleasures, a ruler thereafter rather than a subject of tyranny, or being a slave until the final turn of fate he reaches the world of Hades. (3.1)

As a result Maurice was an example to his subjects, whereas Zeno was a burden to them, a tyrant subject to internal tyranny.[47] Strict

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[45] Cf. Chesnut 1977, 230f.

[46] Cf. Chesnut 1977, 224f., noting Sozomen, 9.11f.

[47] Baldwin (1978, 103) speculated that Evagrius was hinting that Maurice was a reformed sinner, but his analysis ignores the traditions of imperial rhetoric, for which cf. Vanderspoel 1995, 78–80. Theodosius II, who receives similar praise for acquiring self-mastery (Sozomen 9.11f.) was certainly not a

control of the self facilitated proper regulation also of the access that others might have to that self, as exemplified in the persons of Anastasius of Antioch and Maurice (4.40; 5.19): these rigorous individuals were less likely to be seduced by unsuitable confidants such as Theodore Ascidas or Severus of Antioch, influential advisers to the Emperors Justinian and Anastasius (4.38; 3.44).[48]

Self-control, in combination with good sense and decisive planning, was the best basis for coping with the manifold changes of fortune.[49] Not surprisingly, Maurice was most successful in this respect, and he recognized the need to help the victims of fortune's vicissitudes (6.17).[50] Opportunities had to be taken, and Maurice's courage and wisdom provided the ideal basis for decisions on when and where; failure to grasp opportunities could be as damaging as a rash initiative, and the consequences are presented in graphic terms in the narrative of Marcian's failure to depose Zeno (3.26), with reference to the famous statue of *Kairos* (Opportunity) by Lysippus,[51] and again more generally by Gregory of Antioch when addressing the mutinous Roman army (6.12). Zeno and Justin both failed miserably when forced to cope with the unexpected, the former abandoning his imperial position without a struggle when challenged by Basiliscus (3.3) and Justin relapsing into insanity (5.11). When Justin gave advice to the newly-proclaimed Caesar, Tiberius, the central theme of his speech was the need for self-awareness and self-control when possessing the superficial majesty of imperial office (5.13). Other victims of arrogant overconfidence are Khusro, 'who was distraught and helpless and submerged by the ebb and flow of anguish' after his disastrous campaign into Armenia (5.14f.), and the general Priscus who provoked a mutiny in the Roman army that Gregory eventually had to suppress (6.4). In a world in which leading ecclesiastical figures were expected to play prominent roles in secular affairs, it is not

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youthful sinner. The reluctant usurper Germanus (6.5) illustrates the conceit of the enslaved ruler.

48 Cf. Vanderspoel 1995, 147 for Jovian's skill in choosing advisers. Chesnut (1977, 225) notes Sozomen's interest in the quality of imperial advisers; the empress Pulcheria was a rare example of a good one.

49 The ability to react to changes of fortune was one of the most important elements in Theophylact's assessment of individuals: see Whitby 1988, 325f.; Chesnut 1977, 211f.

50 Cf. Chesnut 1977, 205f., for the importance of this in Theodoret's letters.

51 See Chesnut 1977, 211, who cites the description in *Anthologia Palatina* 16.275.

surprising that the ability to achieve results is singled out for praise in the bishops Gregory and Domitian.

Humanity, generosity and avoidance of bloodshed are another cluster of important attributes which the well-balanced ruler has the confidence to display.[52] Unstable individuals were likely to make up for their defects by recourse to deceit and treachery: Zeno and Justin II are again prominent, since the former was notorious for his unreliability while the latter destroyed his cousin whose services to the empire deserved a better reward (3.27; 5.2); the Vandal Geiseric is an example of a comparable barbarian (2.7). Tiberius wished to avoid having even guilty pagans executed (5.18), but it is a sign of his weakness of character that he failed to secure this. Maurice, at least in Evagrius' presentation, was successful in this respect (6.2, 10).[53] Imperial munificence is connected in part with moderate taxation, so that emperors who abolished specific taxes or gave remissions, namely Marcian, Anastasius and Tiberius are praised, while Constantine's reputation for generosity is speciously used as an argument against his responsibility for the *chrysargyron* tax (3.41). Charitable expenditure also receives credit, though Evagrius was sensitive to the need for moderation, such as Tiberius failed to practise (5.13); he also insisted that the money must have been honourably obtained and that the intentions of the spender were proper (4.30), though he did praise Tiberius for applying the ill-gotten gains of Justin II on essential purposes (5.14). It is not impossible that the relative lack of prominence accorded to generosity in Evagrius' scheme of imperial qualities was influenced by the character of Maurice.[54]

By the time that Evagrius constructed his assessments of the qualities of leading figures in his narrative, the guidelines for praising rulers could already be traced back a millenium to Isocrates; the sense of continuity was clear in Themistius who, when praising Constantius II (*Or.* 3.44b–46c), had alluded to the belief of Plato that things would be best when the ruler was young, moderate, mindful, courageous, magnificent, intelligent and philanthropic. Themistius, however, had no difficulty in exploiting this

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[52] Cf. Vanderspoel 1995, 79–81, 201f. for parallels from Themistius.

[53] There is no mention of the execution of the pagan Paulinus, when the Patriarch John overruled Maurice's preference for mercy (Theophylact 1.11.20f.).

[54] By contrast, the nexus of virtues associated with φιλανθρωπία is the key to Themistius' assessments of fourth-century emperors.

tradition to create distinctive pictures of all emperors from Constantius II to Theodosius I; Evagrius was no less successful within his historiographical framework. He had definite views on individuals, which were created in part by his local and Antiochene interests; these views do not always fit the presentation of the individual in the narrative (e.g. Anastasius), but other writers also had problems in harmonizing synoptic assessments and the details of an individual's actions: thus in Ammianus, imperial epitaphs present particular views, but these have to be collated with editorial interventions in the narrative for the complete picture of the author's judgement.[55] Just as Socrates and Sozomen present a variety of imperial characters, with Theodosius II as their symbol of perfection,[56] so Evagrius uses his assessments of individuals to lead up to the panegyric of Maurice. Such praise of the contemporary ruler was almost unavoidable for a historian composing a public work, but examination of the details of what Evagrius does not say, as well as what he says, reveals that the panegyric is not unqualified and that the assessment is tailored to the individual.

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[55] Cf. Matthews 1989, 112–14, for the overlaps between the obituary of Julian and the narrative.

[56] Cf. Urbainczyk in this volume.

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